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MEMOIRS

of the

Gaschen and Voss Families

OF NEW ORLEANS

By LOUIS VOSS

Dedicated to my wife and her folks and mine

Written in July, 1933.

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INTRODUCTION.

After the recent death of my wife's mother we found among her effects a hair bracelet with a gold lock inscribed: "A. R. Lichtenau." Also, in the stack of letters from her aunt and others living in Germany, there were frequent references of visits paid to the Rietz family living at Lichtenau. This led me to trace the relationship. My wife's grandmother told her that the Countess of Lichtenau was the morganatic wife of Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia. In Meyer's Lexicon I found a seven line paragraph saying that she had been married pro forma to Chamberlain Rietz and elevated to the rank of Countess von Lichtenau in 1786, also mentioning her memoirs, published in 1808. In one of Louise Mühlbach's numerous historical novels, "Frederick the Great and the New Era", I had read of her relation to the prince. The writer also refers frequently to the Memoirs of the Countess. In the public libraries of the city I could not get a copy of these memoirs. My sister in Berlin finally secured one for me through the bookstore of her late husband. This led me to write this book which has assumed much larger proportions than originally intended. It occurred to me that our children should be put into possession of a history of their father's family as well as their mother's.

WILHELMINE ENKE

For a long time it has been customary at royal courts for the reigning prince to select a wife for his successor, the choice being dictated solely by dynastic and political consideration. Often such marriages were not based on mutual affection and led either to a morganatic union with another wife or the keeping of a "mistress." This became the prevailing order first in France under Louis XIV and subsequent kings, and spread to other European courts, exercising a corrupting influence in politics as well as the morals of all the classes of the people.

It was so in the case of Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia, the nephew and successor of Frederick the Great. His affection was not towards his official and legal spouse, but to the woman of his own choice. And that relation was acquiesced in not only by the ruler, but also by the wife.

In her historical novel, "Frederick the Great and the New Era," Louise Mühlbach gives the following data which she claims to be historical, giving her sources: That Wilhelmina Enke became the beloved morganatic wife of Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm, nephew of Frederick the Great and afterwards King of Prussia; that she was given a country residence at Charlottenburg. Three children were born to them, two sons and a daughter. When the Prince became King he conferred the title of Countess of Lichtenau upon Wilhelmina. To counteract the efforts of the Rosicrucians who had great influence with the Prince and sought to alienate him from Wilhelmina, she suggested that she go through a marriage ceremony with the Chamberlain J. F. Rietz. It was a marriage in name only. Rietz promised to give his name to Wilhelmina but regard her a stranger always. for a consideration of an annual stipend of 400 talers and the promise of promotion to Confidential Chamberlain when the Crown Prince should ascend the throne. Thus Wilhelmina outwitted the intrigues of the Rosicrucians and secured the happiness of both the Prince and herself. She was true to him to the end.

Grandma Hoppe was very emphatic in her assertion that the Countess was duly married to the Prince "at the left hand" and thus became his morganatic wife, although there is no record of such a marriage in the historical material at hand.

From the mass of material reprinted in the "Memoirs" with the com ments of the editor, I translate only a few incidents that bear on her rel tion to our family ancestors, and some extracts from two churchmen th make her life appear in a more favorable light. Before this, however, may be well to give some extracts from another source, viz: an article i the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* Vol. 18 (at the Howard Library which throws some light on the Countess' life and character: pages 534 536.

This article confirms the data given above. It says: "Still very youn the exceptionally beautifully formed girl attracted the notice of Princ Frederick William of Prussia . . . He took her to Potsdam, gave her governess and sent her to Paris for some time for her education. Personall he instructed her in geography and history and read with her historic works and the classic writers of ancient and modern times. This com munity of teaching and learning, together with the unusual capability of th woman to adapt herself to the peculiar character of the prince, formed bond between the two which bound them together permanently and warmly even after any intimate intercourse had long since ceased. On Jan. 27 1770, they exchanged rings pledging in their blood mutual love and faithful ness. King Frederick (the Great) who had caused her removal for a tim to Hamburg, seems finally to have been reconciled to their relations, as sh says, it was at his direction that the prince bought her a small country hom in Charlottenburg and later a house in Mohren Street in Berlin. So th relation continued until five children were its issue. Later this relationshi cooled down, so that since the birth of the Countess von der Mark (Feb. 29 1780) they actually lived together only as brother and sister. The princ induced her to marry his Chamberlain, Johann Frederick Ritz. After long resistance she agreed to it . . . Also the ascension of the prince to th throne and his connection with Miss von Voss and the Countess Dönhof did not disturb this relation, which rather became more intimate and in tense from year to year . . . The liberality of the King knew no bounds Besides the houses already mentioned she received for herself and her childre another house Unter den Linden, the estates Lichtenau and Breitenwerde situated in the Neumark and shortly before his death a capital of 500,00 talers. . . Whenever possible, as in 1793 in Frankfurt, a. M., he sent fo her and became more and more accustomed to seek and follow her advic in personal and public affairs. It must be emphasized and acknowledge that she never abused this considerable power, except perhaps in one instanc when she seems to have been a party in the king's severe judgment. . . After her elevation to the rank of countess, she was introduced to the court . . . She was constantly with the king during his last severe illness in th fall of 1797, until his death on Nov. 16 of the same year. On that very day she was arrested and her property confiscated. . . After her trial the judicia commission came to the conclusion that she had committed nothing really in criminating. . . In 1811 she secured from King Frederick William III who now admitted that in 1798 "snap judgment" had been taken of her case, a restoration of the estates of Lichtenau and Breitenwerder. (From Acts o the Secret State Archives at Berlin.")

According to her own statement (Memoirs, p. 62) the Countess in herited the house Unter den Linden, at the death of her son, Alexande Count von der Mark, as his natural heir.

The name of the Chamberlain is spelled "Ritz" by some, "Rietz" by others.

Her imprisonment was not a confinement in a jail, but simply that she was deprived of her liberty. She lived in the fortress of Glogau in her own apartments at an annual rent of 400 taler and there entertained many prominent people. She denies that her life there was luxurious or adventurous, as one of her critics charged.

MEMOIRS OF THE COUNTESS

Translation from *"Memoirs of Countess Lichtenau.* A description of the Morals at the Court of the Hohenzollern. Edited by Max Adler." 1920.

"What may be accepted as certain, touching the outward circumstances of the life of this woman, is something like this:

Wilhelmina Countess of Lichtenau, nee Enke, by marriage Rietz, saw the light of a corrupt and pleasure loving world in 1754, at Potsdam, as the daughter of a musician of the royal Prussian band.

At the age of thirteen she was "discovered" by the then crown prince —later King Frederick William II—at the home of her sister, a supernumerary at the Italian Opera in Berlin. In Potsdam she received her first polish under the direction of the Crown Prince, who then sent her for further education to Paris. At the age of sixteen she becomes his mistress; he furnishes her a house at Charlottenburg which he constantly visits, gives her in 1782 a nominal husband in one of his chamberlains by the name of Rietz (whom he afterwards, as king, appoints as a Secret Chamberlain) and, in 1796, the title of Countess of Lichtenau. She bears him three children—Count Alexander von der Mark (1770-1781, to whom Schadow dedicated the famous sepulchral monument in the Dorothea Church at Berlin) the Countess Marianne von der Mark (1778-1828, married in first marriage to the Hereditary Count Frederick von Stollberg) and a son, not recognized, Wilhelm von Rietz-Lichtenau.

Note.—This son is the ancestor of our family through marriage with an aunt of Grandma Hoppe. He refused a title of nobility and adopted the name of Rietz, his stepfather.

During the entire reign of Frederick William II (1786-1797) she occupied an important position at the court, although she was temporarily displaced in the favor of the king by a Miss von Voss and the Countess Dönhoff, but even then she still knew how to charm him at least in arranging for him a refined enjoyment of life. The queen and queen-mother were instructed to draw her into their social intercourse, and although it seems that outwardly she had no part in state affairs, she nevertheless frequently exerted her influence in governmental business matters. The ministers paid homage to her and the ambassadors of foreign powers sought her favor whenever they wished to accomplish some purpose.

After the death of Frederick William II (Nov. 16, 1797), the countess was arrested on the charge of having enriched herself to the detriment of the State and for some time she was confined in the fortress Glogau. Her trial produced no incriminating acts. Nevertheless she was released only upon renouncing her entire fortune, with an annual pension of 4000 taler. Through Napoleon, part of her estate was restored to her. From Glogau she moved to Breslau, married (in 1802) an actor and writer of plays, V. Holbein, from whom she was divorced in 1806, and then moved to Vienna where she died in 1820."

"A mountain of literature on the life and career of the Countess of Lichtenau accumulated—a mass of biological waste paper dealing one-sidedly with erotic matters, confused public opinion. It is this overproduction which is the reason why to-day, a century after her death, her image has not yet been furnished posterity in a clear and definite portrait. This influential mistress of a ruler, living at an essential, nay decisive period of German history, whether as a political or only social power—and for more than a decade living and laboring in the center of power of the old-Prussian state organization, has been fully distorted by her biographers and critics. What was written about her life and character by her contemporaneous authors, was mainly gossip and trash; the valuable, decisive material was either inaccessible or unused." . . . Many of these products "bear the stamp of pornographic purpose, exaggeration, lack of objectiveness and

unreliability. What they write is more significant for themselves and th moral decay of their times than for the Countess Lichtenau."

The Countess replied to some of her accusers in a work of two vol umes, entitled "Apology of the Countess Lichtenau against the charges c several authors. Designed by herself. With a selection of letters to her Motto: "Self-defense justifies Self-praise" (Lessing) Leipzig and Gera 1808."

The present "Memoirs" are based on this work, the author of whic says of it. . . . "Here a fallen greatness whom public opinion had stamped a a criminal, fights against her moral assassination."

She herself says:

"My patience is exhausted. I can no longer keep silent. Hard wa the fate which raised me without my own doings and even against my wish, to a place which thousands begrudged me undeservedly, and then after it had spoiled me by all the finer charms of life, suddenly threw m down from the eminence of the court into a three years' confinement. bore this fate; what does not man bear! Also fate smiled upon me again I regained my liberty and entered into the estate of a golden average. . . Without further celebrity, without any influence but that in my own home I should have justly been spared by writers who once furiously assailed me and remain both unpraised and unslandered. But again fate, weary of it smile, frowns upon me once more. Those who in more favorable time sought my imagined influence . . . these writers again dip their pens in gal and vie with one another for the championship in casting aspersions upon a —woman whose natural protectors they ought to be."

The Countess says: "It is not boasting when I say that among thousands of mistresses of princes mentioned in history, there is perhaps no one that could be compared with me. They may have far exceeded me in bodily charms or mental powers, but their mind had not been trained by the lover himself. The lover had not the satisfaction to look upon his choice as his own product, not the sweet thought: "This one or none will be faithful to me as a pupil and a friend until death." It was the first year of our acquaintance, as he was teaching me that the heart of the crown prince opened toward me in a most affectionate manner . . . He gave me the assurance that he would never forsake me and on his word of honor as a prince he swore that if I should die before him, as the same tender friend he had been until then, he would close my eyes in death. With a pen knife he held in his hand to trim a quill, he made a slash in the ball of his left hand, squeezed out the blood and wrote this pledge on a slip of paper of about three lines. I was so overcome by this act . . . that I took the same knife to cut the thumb of my left hand, but the cut went too deep and took a long time to heal. The words I wrote down with my own blood were a reply to his, viz: that I too would remain his unchangeable friend till his death and never forsake him, . . . He could not keep his word as unfortuately I survived him. But so far as he was concerned, he faithfully kept his promise. The physical bond between us was soon dissolved, with mutual consent, but the spiritual bond remained. His fiery temperament drew him to other women. I knew it, did not envy them, and had no cause to envy them, for the friend remained for me. . . . He refused to consent to my marriage to Mylord Templeton, but for no other reason than that he feared I might go to England with that gentleman and thus our friendly relation would gradually terminate. . . Then came my turn to keep my word—and I have done it, Heaven is my witness. That I could not close his eyes, was not my fault."

The countess repels the charge that she had been proud and arrogant towards the queen mother: "She is no more, that noble and venerable woman," she writes. "Were she still living she would be the first to contradict that abominable slander. Far from meeting her with pride and arro-

gance, which only an insane person could have been guilty of, I felt nothing but love and veneration for her, and only the distance of her high rank prevented the tenderest friendship between us. On her part, far from deigning me unworthy of her grace, she often came to me at Charlottenburg and remained for hours, on which occasions she showered on me thousands of proofs of her condescension and her benevolence." She relates how this noble queen had a portrait of herself painted for the countess, and with her own hands gave her a ring with the inscription: "Gage d' amitie'," also a pair of bracelets with the inscription: "Donne' par amitie'.

Countess von Voss–Ingenheim

(This is no relation of mine).

Miss von Voss, a sister of Minister of State von Voss, became the "first royal mistress." The Countess of Lichtenau repudiates the charge that she had been the procurer and match-maker in this relationship. She writes: "The "virtue" of Miss von Voss demanded among other things as a condition from the king that I, with my surely quite innocent children should be banished to a country estate in East Prussia. But the king, always kind and benevolent toward me, flatly refused this . . . At any rate this entire relation lasted only a few years, as the Ingenheim died of pneumonia."

According to another version, the Countess of Ingenheim died after drinking a cup of chocolate in the theatre and it was charged that Countess Lichtenau had poisoned her. One of her critics, von Cölln ("Intimate Letters") exonerates her of this accusation. She writes (Mem. p. 27): "As the royal body-physician, Dr. Brown, will certify, she died of a common disease of the lungs, hereditary in her family, and only madness could think of poisoning in this case; but yet it was thought, said and printed." According to von Cölln, Miss von Voss "was a victim of her family who sought to convince her that she must yield to the king to save the state. Overstrained by extravagant ideals she yielded, and when she found that the king could not be improved, she nourished an inward grief, the result of remorse, which destroyed her weak, irritable nervous system and caused her death."

Her Relation to Chamberlain Rietz

The Countess asks the public to be excused, "for overwhelming reasons, for not explaining how she "got a husband in Rietz." "Suffice it that this union was only of a passing kind, which is seen from the fact that after a while both he and I were again married otherwise. . . Since the crown prince assumed the full reigns of government, it is true, I still continued for a long time to bear the name of Rietz, but with the man of this name I never dwelt under one roof and never saw him except when he had business with the king and that quite seldom. It is therefore one of the thousand calumnies disseminated against me to place me in public or secret understanding with him, as if he and I had together exerted any influence on the government."

This charge was made by Segur, French Ambassador at Berlin, who speaks of the "infamy" of Rietz, and Mirabeau (in Secret History of the Berlin Court or Letters of a traveling Frenchman) who speaks of him as "Rietz the sharper, buffoon and scoundrel. This Rietz was everything in the house affairs of the king and had a great share in the favor of the court. It is to be noted that he is open to bribery, though this would cost much. because he is avaricious and a spendthrift."

Some Letters to the Countess which speak for Themselves

Two letters from Mylord Bristol, Bishop of Derby (From the French).

Hannover, Oct. 22, 1796.

Dear, adorable Friend:

The rumors about our beloved, amiable and exalted king who is

confined to his bed and very sick, tear my heart. I tremble and am anxi about you: what prospects for you, if something should happen to hi For you who are accustomed to the select surroundings that are worthy your eminent spirit and of your magnanimous heart. What prospects you, dear friend, who are so little concerned about your interests. In a case I offer you my castle in England and my castle etc., in Ireland. voluntarily share my property with a friend who alone possesses my hi and all its love.—

In eight days I stop at my hotel in Berlin and—in the face of a crisis—not with you, lest I increase your difficulties. Rather I will stay Berlin only to decrease them and to bring you the comfort of a frie Farewell, dear friend, until Oct. 28.

Augsburg, Jan. 12, 1798

To Mr. Dampmartin:

Dear Sir.—I am inconsolable about the rumors that circulate in pu and private circles about the Countess. . . .

For very special reasons I dare to ask you at the same time to desc to me explicitly in a letter to be returned to me by the same courier, whole story of this unhappy woman since the death of the king, what been laid to her charge, what can be proved against her and above all w may be learned from her confiscated correspondence. Thereby you infinitely oblige,

Your friend,

C. DE BRISTOL, Bishop of Derby.

(An erroneous report that the Countess had been implicated in polit intrigues with France changed his former admiration of the Coun into hatred).

Johann Kaspar Lavater

A noted writer and pastor of Peter's Church at Zürich.

Though giving spiritual admonition and advice to the Countess, c soling her in view of her imprisonment, he does not refer at all to relation to the Prince, evidently condoning it. He writes to her:

How often, my unhappy Countess, have I thought with sadness you and your fate! How often I entertained the thought of writing to had I only known, how?

I was glad to receive news from you yourself and rejoice to have occasion to write you a line—God grant it may not be in vain.

About the guilt or innocence of your heart, of course, I can say noth You know best about that. After what I had heard from you, I was di founded to read in the newspapers the very opposite of it. They spo when I spoke for you, of immense palaces and sums, which the king said to have withdrawn from the land and given to you. I could re nothing to this, except. "So then I must have been much mistaken in Countess."

But even if I had been mistaken and you had taken advantage of kindness of the king to accept presents that weigh heavily on the land— not think that for that reason I would unfeelingly leave you to your consolate condition. What mortal, what sinner has the right to judge o sinners and look down on them with a proud and severe glance? W knows his own heart so little, that in your place, in case you were gu he would not have been in a strong and hardly resistable temptation to ac too much! In this case, therefore, my lamentable Countess, that you re were as guilty as the world would make us believe, I would not leave comfortless. I would say to you: "Humble yourself under the mighty h of a holy righteousness and justice. Bow with the shameful feeling of y guilty acts under the chastisement that is to purify you. . . If that feel is strong enough, purifying enough for our soul, then all fear and anx of God's wrath disappears and the gracious God appears to the hun heart!"

But if you, oh Countess, find yourself innocent at least in those points that have been charged against you—how easily will then your heart be open to consolation and encouraging instructions. Of course, before God, no man is innocent. . . And for you, too, what now appears to you as injustice and outrage, may be a wholesome remedy for which you will be thankful. The time will come when you will be more glad of your sad and lonely days, than of the gladdest days of your happiest life. You will know and acknowledge: "God meant it better with me than even the best of men. . . Be of good cheer. Use the precious loneliness for wise reflection about yourself and your past—for childlike prayer—for strengthening reading—for retreat—for doing good—for incessant training of your mind and heart. You will, as it were, only now begin to live.

If I can be anything to you, say so openly. Write me as often as you wish. . .

LAVATER.

Zürich, June 23, 1798.

From Letters of Relatives

Extracts from Letters of MARIE PFEIFFER, to her sister Amoena Hoppe, grandmother of the Gaschen and Leclere children.

Visiting Lichtenow after 23 Years

Hof, Oct. 28, 1872.

My Dear Amoena and all the Folks: —

. . . I wrote you in my last letter that at the invitation of my brother (Fritz Rentsch. in Berlin) I was to come to them for some weeks, in the first place to take my daughter Amoena back with me on returning home, who had been in Berlin since March 26 (of the previous year) and in the next place to spend a few weeks of recreation with them.

So I left here in the middle of September of last year, but did not find my Amoena in Berlin as for four months Lichtenow had been her pleasant stopping place. She spent happy days there, as besides Aunt Helene, young and jolly people enlivened by games, singing and laughing the guest rooms of Lichtenow. These were Amoena Ritz, the daughter of Albert, 18 years old, and Willie his son, 16 years old, with a friend of his, by the name of Clemens Schreiber of the same age. The latter was an excellent pianist and the favorite of the whole company.

My desire to see the good Aunt Ritz once again was the chief purpose of my trip and I departed thither on Sept. 24 greatly rejoicing that this would be my good fortune once more. At Friedeberg (a railroad station on the Berlin-Frankfurt on the Oder line) Aunt's carriage with Helene and Amoena awaited me. I can tell you, my good Amoena, a person is seldom overwhelmed by such a feeling as I had when after 23 years I entered the walls of Lichtenow, to see once more the good aunt now so weak and miserable. I wept as much as I could.

When we stopped at the terrace I already spied Wilhelm in the Entre'. He greeted me cordially. He too has turned gray and old. The good aunt lay on the sofa in her room. How her almost blind eyes were enlivened when I brought her greetings from home. My story made her quite young again. She sat up. One question chased the other, so that Wilhelm exclaimed gleefully: "Just see! Marie has made my dear little mother well again." However, the joyful excitement cannot take hold for long in such a body. There came days when she was very, very weak and we thought every hour that the mild hand of death would close the faithful eyes forever. But the Lord revived her again and again and perhaps she will be spared us yet a while.

I intended to stay two days and stayed almost fourteen. There was, of course, a special reason for this: Helene had got it into her head that

she would remain no longer at Lichtenow, but accept a position as housekeeper with a widower in Lippspringe, near Paderborn. All representations that she ought not to leave the good aunt before her evidently near demise were of no avail, and she did not tell Aunt of her intentions until everything had been firmly arranged. Aunt saw her depart with great woe and for me it was indeed a painful situation. You know Aunt's noble heart—she submits without murmuring to what she believes will make a person more satisfied and happy. So I stayed until Helene Rehmann returned from her trip to Meran where she had brought her sister Magda.

Then I and Amoena took our leave. I shall not forget the hour of this parting and would rather have no meeting again if it were again combined with such a going away.

In Berlin I then remained till the middle of October, when I too with Amoena had to say farewell to the pleasant days. Fritz and Clara are very kind and gave us many a glad hour and took much care from our hearts. May the Lord bless them abundantly for everything. . . .

Helene's new enterprise turned out favorably for her in so far, as at Christmas she was engaged to the druggist Rolffs. It is true he is a man with six children, but they are all pretty well provided for. The eldest daughter is married. Of three sons, two have passed their state examination. One is in a drug store at Cassel. One daughter is with her aunt since the death of her mother. The youngest is at home and has made his first communion at Easter. Their wedding was on Jan. 25. We could not go, as the distance is too great. Fritz and Clara represented us and only our good wishes could accompany them to the altar. She has a good and sensible husband who not only loves and respects her, but carries her on his hands. So also the children who esteem their new mother with a truly filial love. In the middle of February she expects a new arrival. May God turn everything for the best. Mother would like to see her daughter's new home and if God keeps her well she will go to her next year. Aunt Ritz is happy now that she knows Helene is happy. "Now I miss you gladly," she wrote to Helene with her own hand. "your going away was after all for your good." Eight weeks after the wedding she came and got all her things, her bedding, linen, etc. Her husband could not accompany her as he was too busy in the drug store. . . . .

My little Fritz was not well last week, but is going to school again to-morrow. Having been for a year in the Latin school, since October he goes to the Industrial school. He learns pretty well and otherwise he is a right good fellow. Amoena is 17 now and almost as tall as I. She is quite active and besides housekeeping looks after the entire laundry, darns, mends and renovates everything. She also assists me vigorously in my business. For that reason I could no longer spare her, although last year she was to stay in Lichtenow and Berlin. She sends regards to her dear Aunt Amoena, to Ida and Ernestine. She still thinks often of you, although otherwise her reminiscence of New Orleans is not especially pleasant. . . With true affection.

Your, MARIE.

In a piece of a previous letter without date, she asks: "How long will Aunt Ritz live, I wonder. She began her 86th year hale and hearty. . . . Helene Knobelsdorf is still in Mansfeld.

Death of Mrs. Wm. Ritz-Lichtenau

Hof, March 16, 1873.

My Dear Amoena:—

. . . On December 2 I again found myself on the way to Berlin to go with Fritz on the next day to Lichtenow to the funeral of good Aunt Ritz. She died, without anyone being aware of it, during the night between Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. The maid who slept with her in the room, found her

at 6 o'clock in the morning, holding her glass of milk in her hand in the bed. They say the fright in the whole house was terrible, because she is said to have been so bright before going to sleep. Fritz telephoned me and I thank him for asking me to come to Lichtenow. It is a great satisfaction to me to have accompanied the good Aunt to her last resting place.

She was buried on Dec. 4, at 10 o'clock. On the day before she was lying in state in the salon, surrounded by beautiful tropical plants and burning candles. A stream of people came in to say a last farewell to the deceased who in her lifetime had spoken only words of blessing to all, and to thank her for the last time. I, too, stood at her bier and again thanked her for all the kindness she had shown me in life. Through her love many a care was lightened for me.

When the funeral took place, all the mourners and relatives filled the salon where a choral was sung and a beautiful address delivered by the Mansfeld minister. Afterwards the body was removed to the Lichtenow Church, everybody accompanying the hearse. There was singing again and another address delivered. And then to the cemetery. For this purpose 18 carriages were waiting. It was decided that only the gentlemen should ride to the cemetery, but Auguste Enke said she would go to the cemetery, too, and so myself, the aunt's lady in waiting and Auguste Enke were the only ladies who joined the long and solemn procession.

On December 5 I returned with Fritz and Max Rehmann to Berlin where I stayed two days.

Willie, the son of Albert Ritz, wanted to spend Christmas with us and asked my permission to come. What could I do? He had the consent of his parents and so I had to give my consent, too.

Willie is a good and dear fellow and felt much at home in our company. However, I soon noticed why he liked staying with us—that Amoena was the sole cause. His youthful "phantasie" (fancy or imagination) is very rich and his thoughts perhaps quite correct, but although they corresponded frequently, this mutual exchange of letters between Willie and Amoena was not approved by his parents, it seems, for he intimated it to us—not in so many words, it is true, for he is generally of a tender nature, but we surmised it nevertheless, and one day I undertook to tell him quietly that the correspondence between him and Amoena must cease, that Amoena at any rate would write no more, etc. Since then we have heard nothing more from good old Willie. But it is better so. Amoena is much too young to think of love affairs.

From the good Aunt Ritz we received as a last souvenir her black silk dress which she had promised Amoena while she was yet living—1-2 doz. shirts, 1-2 doz. towels, 12 pair stockings, 2 night jackets, 3 undershirts, her morning gown, 3 little caps for mother and for Fritz out of Aunt's writing desk penholders and steel pens, and from Wilhelm for me 20 taler for my traveling expenses. We had great joy, but also felt sad when we saw these gifts which Aunt herself had worn.

Wilhelm also sent me a letter. The poor man feels the loss of his mother with deep pain. He feels quite forsaken. Nobody is around him, except Helene Rehmann and the housekeeper, and Helene Rehmann intends to leave Lichtenow in the spring.

Helene in Lippspringe is well, thank God. She had a little son, born February 9. Mother and child are well.

MARIE.

Many Amoenas

My wife Irene told me that she heard her grandmother relate how as a young girl she often visited the relatives at Lichtenau and described the castle with its beautiful rooms, the floors of many laid in mosaic and the walls of the salon being mirrored all around. The young girls going in there at night in search of pfeffer-nuts and other dainties kept in the window seats, felt spooky seeing their reflections in all the mirrors. The hair

bracelet with gold clasp inscribed "A. R., Lichtenau", now in our possession was given her on one of these visits. The initials A. R. evidently standing for Amoena Ritz, the daughter of Albert Ritz and niece of "Aunt Ritz." She was evidently named after the Grandmother of Irene, Amoena Rentsch-Hoppe who bore it first.* The second was Amoena Ritz, the third, Amoena Pfeiffer afterwards Mrs. Leykauf, the daughter of Marie Pfeiffer, grandma Hoppe's sister and writer of the letters translated herein. Aunt Jette, Mrs. Pfeiffer's sister in Hof, also had a daughter named Amoena. The fifth Amoena is my daughter Elsie Amoena Voss-Sturtz.

Grandma Hoppe also related that a figure of the late Countess of Lichtenau resting on a catafalque all carved in white marble was stationed in the salon, adding to its spookiness at night.

More about Lichtenau and its People

From later letters of Marie Pfeiffer to Amoena Hoppe.

Hof, May 20, 1873.

Wilhelm Ritz leads a lonely life since the death of his mother (Mrs. Rentsch-Ritz-Lichtenau). He wrote me twice. His letters are sad and despondent. On March 26, her (his mother's) birthday, I sent a wreath to place on her grave, but Wilhelm wrote it would be a pity to do that and they had hung it around Aunt's picture where it would remain fresh longer. This little attention evidently pleased him.

Hof, Sept. 19, 1873.

From Lichtenau we have heard little since the death of Aunt. What can I write Wilhelm?

Hof, Jan. 29, 1880.

Helene (Rolffs) was in Berlin and went from there to Lichtenau to see Wilhelm, Alexa and the old rooms once more. Lichtenau and its proprietor have grown old. She found many things different from what they were before. Alexa is improved, it is true, but she has hallucinations, and that condition will continue. She does not feel at home there.

From last page of a later letter undated:

In Lichtenau, Alexa is not quite content, as Helene writes. Why, I cannot say. We hear almost nothing from them. They did not inform us that Alexa has returned as cured to her parental house. They do not seem to recognize us as members of the family or perhaps do not remember that we belong to that line too.

Hof, Sept. 1880.

Alexa Goethe, as I wrote you some time ago, was discharged as cured from the private institution at Lemko, and stayed some time with Wilhelm at Lichtenau until, at Wilhelm's request, Augusta Finke and Alexa agreed to live together. This did not last long, however, as Augusta again noticed things in Alexa that did not agree with her former clear views, and that the hallucination of being persecuted again took hold of her. One night she left secretly and poor Augusta started out to look for her. Wilhelm has placed her in an institution again and I think she will spend the rest of her days there. It was well that Aunt Ritz did not live long enough to witness this.

From last page of another letter (no date):

"From Lichtenau we seldom hear. Wilhelm informed us last year of the death of his sister, Helene von Knobelsdorf, and asked me to find out from the church records where she was born. . . You can imagine that Wilhelm is inconsolable. Alexa is still in the private institution where she has been for years. She was not present at the funeral of her mother (Helene v Knobelsdorf) Another sad case.

Hof, Jun 4, 1882.

Wlihelm Ritz died February 15 of cancer of the bowels. What his last will was, we have not heard. Willie, the son of Albert, is probably the chief heir as he adopted him as his child. MARIE.

Two Remarkable Sisters

Otto Rentsch was born Dec. 2, 1792, at Hof, Bavaria, and died in 1859.

His wife, Charlotte Westphal, was born Dec. 3, 1793, in Hof, and died there July 18, 1888, aged 95.

~~Charlotte's~~ sister, whose first name is ~~not given~~ died Dec. 1, 1873, at the age of over 86 years, at Lichtenau.

These two sisters, both of whom died at an extreme old age, are the ancestors of the Gaschen and Leclere families.

~~Charlotte Westphal's~~ sister was the wife of Wilhelm von Rietz-Lichtenau. The editor of the "Memoirs of the Countess of Lichtenau" refers to him as "Wilhelm von Rietz-Lichtenau." (page 7) (page 5 of this book).

He evidently inherited the castle and estate of Lichtenau from his mother, the Countess.

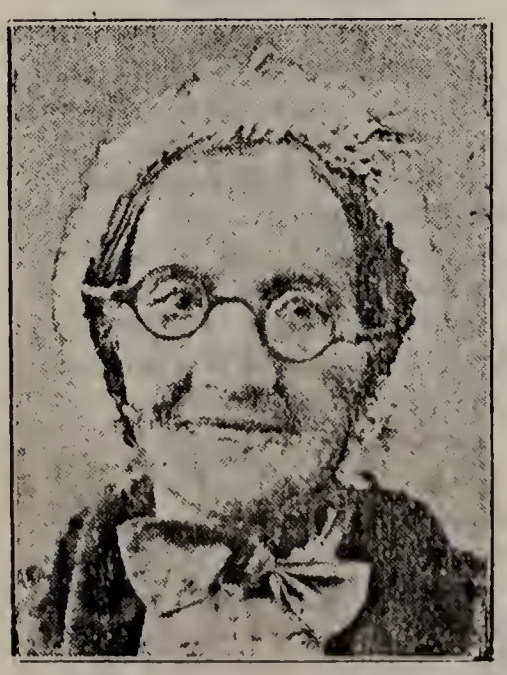
Aunt Ritz was its mistress and owner, and must have lived there many years. Her niece, Marie Pfeiffer writes that she visited her again for the first time after 23 years. (See p. 9). She must have taken leave of her aunt in 1849 when she left on a visit to New Orleans with her husband and daughter.

She refers to her aunt simply as Aunt Ritz, never as von Ritz.

There lived with "Aunt Ritz" at Lichtenau:

1. Her son Wilhelm who died Feby. 15, 1882.
2. Her daughter Helene von Knobelsdorf, mother of Alexa.
3. Alexa Goethe
4. Albert Ritz. He must have been a younger brother of Wilhelm. As stated on page 4, 5 children were born to the Countess. Albert may have been one of the two unnamed children mentioned there, Helene von Knobelsdorf being the other. His son Willie was adopted by Wilhelm, and probably inherited Lichtenau upon the death of Wilhelm
5. Amoena Ritz, daughter of Albert, and niece of Wilhelm
6. Augusta Enke, a relative of the Countess on her (the Countess') father's side.

Last Days of Charlotte Rentsch, nee Wastphal



CHARLOTTE RENTSCH WESTPHAL

Born Dec. 3, 1793.
Died, July 18, 1888.

As described by her daughter Marie Pfeiffer in letters to her sister Amoena Hoppe.

Hof, July 23, 1877.

Grandma is well so far as can be expected at her advanced age (84) but her srength is failing. The shortest walk exhausts her. For weeks she sits at the window enjoying the fresh air. To do any housework which she used to do easily and gladly is out of the question.

Hof, Aug. 18, 1878.

As I wrote you, Mother has days, when she is very weak, but with God's help always rallies again. Last Thursday we were on the Stein (an elevation),



Mother and I rode up there, for to walk both ways would have been too much of an effort for her. So we rode up and walked down. She enjoyed staying up there, meeting many old acquaintances whom she had not seen for a long time, and in the evening she went with me to a family in the neighborhood where we had roast duck and stayed till 11:30 p. m.

Hof, June 27, 1888.

. . . Mother is still living, but does not leave her bed. I have to wash her like a child and lift her on my arms from bed to sofa and back. She takes little food and sleeps nearly the whole time, but her mind is still clear enough to understand what is spoken. However, before she gets still weaker, yesterday Mother, Aunt and I took the communion. Mother listened attentively to the words of the minister and at the close responded with a distinct Amen. If she lives till Dec. 3, she will then be 95.

Hof, Aug. 10, 1888.

What I have to write you to-day is contained in the momentous words: "I have lost forever my good old mother." The Lord took her to himself on July 18, at 8:30 p. m. . . .

For two days before her death she slept the whole time, but died fully conscious. . . On the last day, her heart beat terribly and she was suffering greatly. I sent for the doctor. . . While I went to get her a drink, she said to Aunt Jette: "I am not afraid to die. I die gladly." When I asked if she wanted a drink, she said: "Not now." Those were her last words. I folded my hands and prayed: "Lord, grant her a peaceful end." Then she took a deep breath and the true mother heart had ceased to beat for her children. . . She was buried on July 21. She looked beautiful on her bier, surrounded by 30 bouquets of flowers—in a white gown and covered with a pall of lace reaching to the floor, a white silk cap on her head tied with pale purple ribbon, candles burning on tables at the right and at the left, at the head our Lord Jesus on the Cross.

This was the writer's last letter.

The Rentsch Family

Otto Rentsch and Charlotte Westphal had two sons:

Fritz and Rudolph Rentsch. The latter went to Russia, where he kept a book-store and died young.

There were five sisters:

Amoena Hoppe,
Marie Pfeiffer,
Lisette Wagner,
Helene Rolffs,
Jette Just.

Marie's daughter was Amoena Leykauf. Marie separated from her husband, but received his estate.

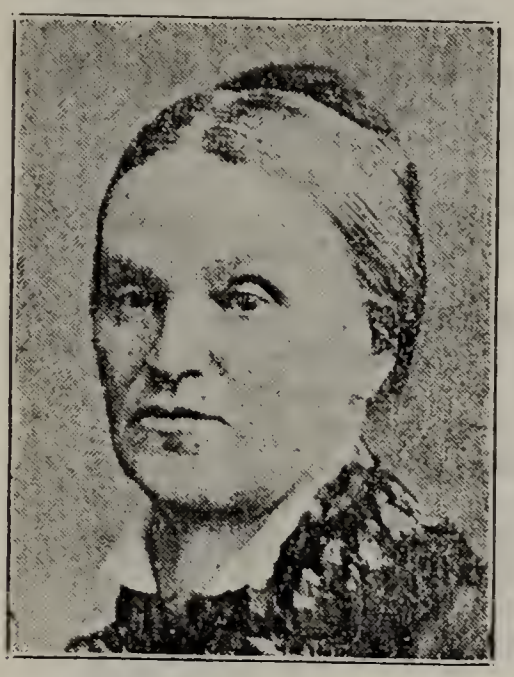
In a letter dated March 25, 1879, Marie Pfeiffer gives the following data of her brother Fritz:

"Clara (wife of Fritz Rentsch) in Berlin has six children: Otto, aged 22 years, Lieschen 21, Fritz 5, Brunno 4, Gertrud 2 1-2, Heintz 1 year. Elsbeth, aged 2, died 8 years ago. A boy also died, 8 days old."

In 1906, Sadie and I made a trip to Europe (Germany, Switzerland and Italy). In a letter of July 4, 1906, I wrote home:

"On Tuesday, July 3, we started out at 10 a. m., to look up Frederick Rentsch whose address we found in a long list of Rentsch's in the city directory and who lived only a few squares from where we are stopping. Mrs. Rentsch received us on the fifth floor and after learning who we were, asked us in. She proved to be the widow of Fritz Rentsch, the brother of Grandma Hoppe. He died only last March, the 15th, aged over 80. Six children survive him, of whom two are married. He had met with business reverses toward the end of his life. Mrs. Rentsch knew about

Grandma being the best looking girl of her native city and of her going to America with her two children, Ida and Ernestine. She said that Mr. Gaschen, Mama's father, had visited them once. A picture of the whole Rentsch family hung over the sofa. It had been made for the 90th birthday of Mr. Rentsch's mother, who was Sadie's great-great-grandmother. From Mrs. Rentsch we learned that her husband's sister, Mrs. Helen Rolffs, was dead, and that Mrs. Lisette Wagner, another sister, had also died many years ago. Mrs. Amoena Leykauf is probably alive. She knew nothing of Christian and Edward Hoppe, Carl Weis or Mrs. Mathilda Hoffmann."



MARIE RENTSCH PFEIFFER



AMOENA RENTSCH HOPPE

Last Days of Marie Pfeiffer, nee Rentsch

Died Feby. 19, 1889.

From letters of her daughter Amoena Pfeiffer Leykauf, to Amoena Hoppe.

Hof, Feby. 8, 1889.

My Dear Aunt:

You will be surprised that to-day, instead of seeing the familiar hand writing of mother, I am the writer of these lines. . . There is a sad reason for this: my mother is seriously ill. . . Half a year has passed since the death of Grandmother. That death so affected Mother that she planned to seek rest and strength at the home of my brother Fritz in Obernburg. Her letters from there to me were quite encouraging. But she stayed only five weeks. In November she became severely sick. She suffered intense pains in the region of the heart, stomach and intestines, so that for twelve days and nights she found no sleep. Morphine gave her only temporary relief. The doctor tells me it is heart trouble and hardened arteries. The stomach is also affected. She can retain no food. The doctor says it is cancer of the stomach. Mother does not know it. She clings to life for the sake of my children. . . If possible write her a few lines. She sends her loving regards to all her distant loved ones.

Hof, March 2, 1889.

Dear Aunt:

The black border of this letter indicates its sad message—My dear mother, your sister, closed her eyes forever on Feby. 19. Seven months after the death of her mother we stood weeping at her bier. . .

The disease of my poor mother progressed rapidly. Her stomach would retain nothing. Champagne, fruit ice and tea were her sole nourishment and for the last two weeks she could not retain that. . . Her body



became so emaciated that she was bed-sore too. On the 19th the doctor came at 5 a. m. He could do nothing saying it is the end. I could only pray God to relieve the poor, tired soul of her suffering. She was buried on the 21st. My brother Fritz was present and all her acquaintances attended her funeral. Many floral offerings bore witness of the esteem and love in which she was held. An autopsy taken at the suggestion of the physician confirmed his diagnosis. Stomach, esophagus, spleen—everything covered with blisters and eaten by cancer—hence the terrible pains. . . So Grandmother was soon followed by her daughter. They are buried not far from one another

AMOENA LEYKAUF.

The foregoing letters of Marie Pfeiffer and her daughter are pervaded with a spirit of piety, faith in God and resignation to his will. This is true also of the following letters of Helene Rolffs. Her little daughter, Gretchen, born October 20, 1874, had written a few lines to Grandma Hoppe, and the child's mother adds:

Lippspringe (about 1883)
Sunday morning.

I must not leave the vacant space in Gretchen's letter unused. She is now at church, the good child. Every night she prays earnestly for all her relatives far and near. I have taught her to pray from her heart. Thereby a child gets into a more personal relation to God and the Saviour. So she tells the Lord everything that is on her young heart and it is astonishing what all she utters, e. g.: "Dear Lord, preserve our home from harm and danger, keep all men, especially the sick and suffering. Let the dying depart in faith that they may be set at thy right hand before thy judgment seat." All this really comes from her heart. What she is concerned about is that we may all meet in heaven, living so far apart. With it all she is a cheerful little soul.

To Grandma Hoppe, her sister, she writes after the death of Ida Leclere:

Lippspringe, Nov. 24, 1883.

. . . Do not worry too much about the children. Remember, you might take sick and be unable to do anything for them. Lay them in prayer upon the heart of Him who cares for them with more than a mother's love. In the twelve years of my married life, in spite of favorable outward circumstances, I have seen much trouble and hardship, with six stepchildren and a good, but somewhat cranky husband, but I have overcome it all, thank God, in prayer and practicing the word, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Now I reap the reward of it, for they, one and all, bear me on their hands, and in the love of my children and grandchildren I bear the whims of my husband as when on a bright summer day a little cloud obscures the sun—I don't take notice of it . .

HELENE ROLFFS.

The Hoppe Family

Amoena Rentsch Hoppe landed with her husband August Hoppe, (born Oct. 19, 1818, in Asch, Austria) and two daughters—Ernestine (born April 21, 1841 in Asch) and Ida (born Oct. 22, 1839 in Asch) at New Orleans on the "goodship" Leontine on Nov. 10, 1849.

In my "History of the German Society of New Orleans", on page 94, I said:

"August Hoppe acted as agent of the German Society during the yellow fever epidemic of 1853, as stated on p. 80. . . . He first came to New Orleans in 1842. He enlisted in the Mexican War, after which he joined Buffalo Bill in hunting buffaloes. In 1843 he returned to Germany to get his wife and two daughters.

August Hoppe was the son of Johann Hoppe, born Jan. 6, 1780, at Asch, and his wife Margaret Schiller, born Oct. 19, 1800. They were married Jan. 24, 1818. August was their only son. They had 6 daughters,

The Leclere Family



EDMOND VICTOR LECLERE



IDA HOPPE LECLERE.

Ida Hoppe married Victor Leclere on June 15, 1861. He was the son of Emile Leclere and Onora Emelia Zamico. He was judge of the Third District Recorder's Court and Harbor Commissioner of the Port. Their children are:

Emile, born March 11, 1862, died Jan. 18, 1928.
Sidney, born Oct. 20, 1863, died Apr. 16, 1929.
Victor, born June 1, 1866, died Feby. 7, 1917.
Edmund, born Sept. 20, 1870.
Virginia, born Oct. 4, 1873.

Their mother died Oct. 27, 1883, at the age of 43 years and 5 days.
Their father died Dec.18, 1908, 72 years old.

The brothers Emile, Sidney and Victor were recognized leaders in public life and held various political offices.

In the Leclere Family there are now living 2 children, 15 grand children, 17 great-grand children.

The Gaschen Family



FREDERICK GASCHEN



ERNESTINE HOPPE GASCHEN









Ernestine Hoppe married Frederick Gaschen, born Feby. 13, 1834, in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. His mother was a Ferario. He died May 7, 1874, aged 40 years. He was a member of the firm of Gaschen & Tibolier, flour merchants.

He writes to his wife:

Neuchatel, July 16, 1863.

My Well-beloved Ernestine:—

I have not yet received an answer to my two letters, from New York and from here, but am compelled to write you concerning your and Ida's inheritance the following which you must note very particularly and act upon quickly:

To-day there was returned to me the power of attorney which both of you gave Mr. Just, with a letter from Mr. Wagner in which he informs me that the power of attorney is quite worthless, because both of you were not of full age at the time it was made out, and that sickness had prevented Mr. Just to answer my letter or to act in the matter, but that my letters and documents had been sent to him (Mr. Wagner) and he had accordingly caused both of you to be declared of age by the court there and he had nominated himself as your temporary guardian. In confirmation of this he sent me a copy of an authorization by which you are empowered to receive your shares of the estate of your grandfather and grandmother under the following conditions:

You can secure at once from the Austrian Consul at New Orleans a special authorization duly legalized by him, in which you authorize Mr. Carl Wagner as your empowered agent to receive the money from the Court at Asch and authorize me to receive all the cash in his hands at the time of my departure. He assures me that it would be impossible to liquidate all this in less than half a year, although it has been invested exceedingly well and safe.

You can imagine how this news grieved me, for now I am compelled to postpone my departure for a whole month, for with my money I cannot pay the traveling expenses home and would like to reduce them, as I intend to take with me suitable goods for the market there, which of course cannot be done without cash, for who would enter into credit relations with America under the present conditions (on account of the Civil War, L. V).

You can send the power of attorney to the grandmother in Hof under my address, for I will probably be there at that time. If you hurry this matter, it can be here inside of 42 days. A little recommendation on the part of your mother to Mr. Wagner to hand me the cash, or, if necessary, to advance me money on account would do no harm.

Dear Ernestine—When I first received this news, I intended to pack up and return to you at once, but after mature reflection, I see that it will be better for me and for all of you, to wait until the new authority arrives, which may take 42 to 45 days, for during that time, the three months' notice of the mortgages will also expire. As Mr. Wagner writes me, he has already given notice for payment of all mortgages on the 8th inst., and by Oct. 1, I can surely get the greater part, and then in 22 days I can be with you.

(Here the letter is badly torn and partly illegible. What I can decipher is this):

With regard to the amount, Mr. Wagner and I do not quite agree. He writes me that the combined inheritance of both is approximately 8000 gulden C. M., while . . . alone must amount to 10 000. Also the quick settlement of the guardianship of the former guardian Mr. Just, on the part of the Court is imperative.

In any case both of you can rest assured that I will duly guard your interests.

With me at home everything is also in great disorder and I intend to straighten out everything before I leave.

My mother I found robust and well, in spite of her advanced age, at Anet. As for me, nobody knew me and I was not a little annoyed when former schoolmates called me "Mister" and took off their hats.

Yesterday I arrived here after a trip with my mother to Chaumont, a mountain 4000 feet high, with a most beautiful view, and where my oldest brother lives. Mother remains there, while I have to go to the city frequently on account of letters, when I always stay a few days with my sister. It costs me nothing. Anyway, you can imagine how sparingly I live, when many a day I spend only 15 centimes, or 3 cents.

That on Chaumont I drink plenty of milk and eat much butter, you can easily understand, and I only regret that you are not with me.

I will at once address some lines to Mr. Robert Scott, as I want to buy through him some bales of moss which could be sold to great advantage.

And now, how are you and the dear little Irene, and your mother and Ida? Does Irene still call "Papa" in the morning and does she still play the piano? Are you making progress? Do you ever think of me? I almost begin to doubt it. I burn with a desire to see a few lines from you. Be not so dilatory. Let me soon hear from you.

Now I must close, though I have yet many things to say, but I must answer a letter from Mr. Wagner. Good bye, my ever beloved Ernestine. Kiss Irene for me. Let her not forget her Papa. Give my regards to Mother and Ida. But to you my best regards and kisses from your husband who never forgets you. FRITZ.

P. S.—Address as already stated.

As I dread the small expense, I have not even been to La Chaux-de fonds where the great national (or cantonal) shooting takes place which I have never yet seen, and yet the distance is only 15 minutes by railroad. FRITZ.

Mathilda Hofman, sister-in-law of Grandma Hoppe, writes from Asch, Jan. 18, 1883:

"How well I remember handsome Gaschen. His charming personality made a lasting impression on me and I regretted his early death. He invited me to visit you all and laughed when I said: "If it were not for the big brook!"

Frederick and Ernestine Gaschen had 11 children.

Their first five children were all prematurely born. Some of them lived a few days. The other children are:

Irene Ida, born Jan. 3, 1862.
Alfred, born Dec. 14, 1864, died Jan. 5, 1866.
Albert J., born Oct. 26, 1866.
Theresa (Daisy), born Apr. 15, 1869, died Aug. 3, 1909.
Frederick S., born Apr. 8, 1871.
Lolly, born Aug. 29, 1873, died June 28, 1880.

Their mother died March 21, 1933. Daisy never married. She lived with us for about ten years and was buried from our house at 932 Second Street. Her mother, known as "Gongie" by all the family, a name given her by her first grandchild Sadie, was with us over forty years and was buried from 3427 Chestnut Street.

At the birth of the first grand child, five generations were living, viz:
Sadie Voss, born Feby. 4, 1886.
Her Mother Irene Voss.
Her Grandmother Ernestine Gaschen.
Her Great Grandmother, Amoena Hoppe.
Her Great Great Grandmother Charlotte Rentsch, who died in 1888, at the age of 95 years.

In the Gaschen Family there are living 3 children, 13 grand-children and 20 great-grand children.

THE VOSS FAMILY

Irene Voss, nee Gaschen, daughter of Ernestine Gaschen, nee Hoppe Granddaughter of Amoena Hoppe, nee Rentsch, Great-Granddaughter of Charlotte Rentsch nee Westphal, who was the sister of Mrs. Wm. Rietz-Lichtenau and daughter-in-law of the Countess of Lichtenau, was married on Dec. 10, 1884 to

Rev. Louis Voss

Pastor, First German Presbyterian Church, now First Street Presbyterian Church, 1880.

Stated Supply, Gretna Presbyterian Church, 1900—Pastor Presbyterian Church, 1933.

Stated Clerk, Synod of Louisiana, 1901.

Stated Clerk, Presbytery of New Orleans, 1892.

Dean of Presbyterian Ministers' Assn., 1902.

Professor Greek and German, Sophie Newcomb College, Tulane University, 1891-92.

Editor Altenheimbote (Old Folks' Home Messenger), 1888.

Associate Editor Southwestern Presbyterian, 1897-1908.

Author of:

Prize Essay, "The Eldership", 1897.

Prize Essay, "Confirmation."

Prize Essay, "The Old Testament and Social Reform."

"Louisiana's Einladung an Deutsche Landwirte und Kolonisten" 1907.

"The Great European War," 1914, (published by Sendker).

"Presbyterianism in the S. W.," 1923 (published by Presbyterian Board of Publication.

"History of German Society", (published on its 80th Anniversary, 1927.

"The German Coast of La.," 1928. (by Concord Society).

"The System of Redemption in Louisiana", including "Sally Müller, the White Slave" 1929, (published in La. Hist. Quarterly).

"History of First Street Presbyterian Church, 1929.

"Die Deutschen in Amerika," 1930 (Concord Society).

"Presbyterianism in New Orleans," 1930, Presbyterian Bd. Publication.

(All the above are in the Howard Library, New Orleans).

Born March 7, 1856, at Uetersen, Holstein, then under Danish flag now German, the eleventh of thirteen children, nine of whom grew to maturity. Attended Ramm's Boys' Institute. at Uetersen.

Left home at the age of 16 to join his older brother Gustav in Chicago. Knew enough English to make his way from Hamburg to Chicago alone. The greater part of Chicago was in ruins after the great fire of 1871, even the wooden pavements were charred and black.

Under date of July 14, 1872, my father wrote to a friend about all his children. Concerning my first trip to America he says:

"Louis reached Chicago safe and sound on June 13, after a pleasant but somewhat tedious trip. He had only one little mishap, in that he could not find his bed (i.e. mattress), eating, drinking and washing utensils (which each passenger had to furnish then, and were sent aboard ahead). For this reason he had to sleep in the hard bunk and use other people's eating utensils. Thank God it is over now. My fear that perhaps his money would not reach, was not entirely unfounded. After his passage and all necessary expenses had been paid in Hamburg, he still had 100 Marks or $30 ("Courant"— not the same as Reichsmark), but still this did not reach. However he had an order on New York to be used if necessary. Prudently he first bought in Castle Garden a railway ticket for the express train which takes 36 hours, while the other (immigrant train) takes 72. The former cost 22 dollars, the latter $13, to Chicago. After this he was to

pay duty on a silk dress and a buckskin suit for which he was charged $12 in gold, but unfortunately he had but $11 in paper money. Thereupon the officials struck out the buckskin and he had to pay only 22 Marks, 8 Pfennig. Thus he still had 5 Marks. On his arrival in Chicago he took a cab for $2 which brought him to Gustav's door. But as he had only $1.35, the sister-in-law had to put her hands into her pocket right upon his arrival which she also did cheerfully. Gustav wept abundantly for joy. What he will be, was not discussed on the first day. Am expecting another letter soon."

In Chicago I found work in the Electrotype Foundry of Zeese & Co. That work did not suit me and I soon had another position in a Cutlery Store of Gus Knecht where I earned $8 a week, Cor. Madison and Wells Streets.

One day a letter arrived from my father in Germany, stating that in the "Botschafter," a periodical published by Dr. Geo. C. Seibert in New York, he had seen an article on theological seminaries in this country which train young men for the ministry, giving financial aid to those who cannot afford to pay their way. In the letter, my father asked if I would not like to enter one of these institutions. I jumped at the opportunity of realizing a long cherished wish. Even as a boy I had a secret desire to study for the ministry; but knowing that this would mean a great sacrifice on the part of my father on account of the expense entailed by a long course of study in the old country, I had not the courage to express this wish, though doubtless it would have been gratified, another brother having already studied theology.

My brother Gustav consulted with his pastor, Rev. F. Hartmann of St. Paul's Evangelical Church, who instead of referring me to a seminary of his own denomination, at once took the matter up with his bosom friend, Rev. Dr. Seibert, the above editor of the Botschafter and professor at the Theological Seminary at Bloomfield, N. J., and within ten days I was enrolled among the students of that school, an institution of the Presbyterian Church. This was in October, 1873. Thus it was, that in the Providence of God I became a Presbyterian minister, though born and reared in the Lutheran faith.

The six years spent in Bloomfield are among the happiest of my life. Board and lodging, as well as tuition were free. By my knowledge of music I was able to earn some pocket-money, giving a few piano lessons at $1 an hour, and playing the organ in the Bloomfield German Presbyterian church, at a monthly salary of $5.

Thus I was enabled to make a trip to Europe every other year (1874, 1876, 1878) during the three months' vacation. Traveling in the steerage, the return ticket from New York to Hamburg cost me less than my board for these three months would have cost me in Bloomfield. In later years I visited Germany from New Orleans in 1883, 1894, 1906 (with Sadie) 1922, (with Elsie) and 1929. (See my diaries of 1894 and 1906, also Sadie's, all written in English). These later trips were made to attend reunions of our whole family, the first of which was held in 1883, when our father was still living. Nine of his children gathered around him, 6 sons and 3 daughters, some with their children. Three brothers came from America, Gustav (with Gustav, Jr.) Gottfried and myself, one from India, 2 from different cities in Germany, and of the 3 sisters one came from India, 1 from St. Petersburg, Russia, 1 from Berlin all with their husbands.

After graduating from Bloomfield Seminary in 1879, I took a post graduate course at the University of Leipzig with three classmates of mine, 1879-1880. They were Fritz Saure, Julius Goebel and Hein Seibert, all three of them still living. Seibert wrote a story about me later on, entitled: "Some Low-German. A Reminiscence."

That part of Germany sloping towards the North and Baltic Seas, a flat country, is called 'Low' or Nether Germany (like the Netherlands).

My native land, Holstein, is part of that section. The people speak the Low German dialect, in their every day intercourse, but High German is used in the Church and in the School. Seibert uses a fictitious name in referring to me, but I will use my initial V. instead. A translation of his story is as follows:

Some "Low-German" in High German

The Low Germans are a peculiar type of people in many respects. Their robust, blunt, but yet genial nature is not rightly understood, much less appreciated by outsiders. All sorts of ugly characteristics are imputed to them which upon impartial investigation prove to be entirely false and unfounded. It is true, the Low German is tough and of strong bones. He has more sinews than nerves and is not easily changed in his convictions. . . . But is not that quality rather a virtue? In my opinion it is based on an inflexible sense of right and liberty and "obstinacy" is certainly an ugly and wrong name for it. The Low German does not carry his heart on his tongue, like the Southern German. He is sober and practical. To deny that he has a sense for poetry and for everything superior to the material, is a stupidity of which nobody should be guilty who knows even by name only such writers in Low German as Claudius, Groth and Reuter. Their language is like their "black bread," coarse grained and sourish. Both require a healthy stomach, and whoever has that, also is a spiritual sense, will find them wholesome and tasty. "In no language known to me can one be as rough, in none can one speak as tenderly to the heart", says Claus Harms, and that is also a striking and *good* description of their characteristics.

Another incorrect reproach made summarily against the Low Germans is that *they are stingy*. I am not one of them, but have mingled much with them and therefore speak from experience, when I say: That is not true. Certainly not more of them than of Southern German and Swiss people grown up in reduced circumstances. There is a grain of truth, however, in this wrong interpretation which, like the above mentioned toughness of their character, deserves praise rather than censure. It is their eminent gift for the practical. If they apply that also to the acquisition and spending of money, they should not be upbraided for it. Rather, it would be a good thing for many a man who does not know how to live within his income, were he to have a little of this Low German peculiarity. To prove this, let me give a few examples.

At the University of Leipzig my pleasantest intercourse was with some friends from "Low Germany." One student especially was what the students called "solid," i. e., steady and they gave him the nickname "Kauz." i. e., odd fellow. If his friends had to see by all means the new play at the theatre, he had just borrowed a new book from the library which he must read. If the others wanted to go on a hike, he had to "attend a lecture." He joined his friends only when they had finished their morning beer, to go to dinner with them. His notes (of lectures attended) were without omissions and were used preferably by the others to copy from. But he was by no means a stick-indoor or book-worm, but a good mixer and as jolly as any. What kept him at home was the fear of unnecessary expenses, for his resources were limited and he could expect no future income from home except some loaves of black-bread, a pot of butter and some sausages occasionally. But nevertheless, or rather for that very reason, he always had money left when ours was all spent, so that we could always get a small loan from him, which he would grant obligingly.

"My money is safer with you than with me," he would say, "for sometimes I feel like indulging in an extravagance which you know I cannot afford to do. But if my money is out, there is a stop to the temptation at once."

On one occasion when I was with him in his den—it was still very near

the beginning of the semester, he said: "You can keep it till next semester. I will have six groschen to spare at the end of this semester."

"But, man, how can you know that now?"

"Why, I keep an account."

'I do that, too. Look, here is everything I have received and spent to date," I said, pulling out my memorandum book.

"That is very well," he answered, "but the main thing is lacking, viz: what you are *going* to spend or *want* to spend"

Then he showed me his account book and I was astonished to see how his expenses for the whole coming semester, including the Sunday cigar and every package of tobacco were already noted down even now.

"So much for lodging, dinners and a cup of coffee at the Rosenthal, supper, etc, etc. So much for a trip home. There remains, if I keep well, ten taler, which I have just lent you, and six groschen."

"You may call this trivial," he continued, "but only in this way is a private book-keeping of any practical value. You know how much you must and may spend at any hour which is a great advantage under all circumstances, but in my situation, as you know, it is a duty. The mere noting down of the expenses has only an historical value, like a note in your diary: "Caught cold last light." It is the same thing with me, only I tuck by blankets well under at night, keep my feet warm and stay well."

Laughing, I left him, determined to adopt his book keeping. I succeeded in adopting it, but not in carrying it out. I am not a Low-German, you see.

Another time, in spite of his rules, he could not restrain his desire to indulge in an extravagance. He wanted to visit his sister in Berlin who was married there to a school teacher.

One day he came to my den in great excitement.

"There is an excursion train going to Berlin to-morrow, return ticket, third class, 9 mark 50, good for three days. I have lent out all my money except 5 marks. Can you help me out with as much?"

"Of course, with as much as you want. I got my check yesterday."

"Very well. Ten marks will be enough for the trip. In Berlin my sister can look out for the rest."

Having laid it upon my heart to miss no lecture during his absence, so that on his return he could copy my notes, he departed, happy as a child.

"To-day, V. comes back," I said on the third day to the friends at the dinner table. "We will go to his room to-night and wait for him. I'll treat chocolate."

Towards evening we were all gathered. His landlady brought in the chocolate. We had to drink it alone. V. did not come. Neither on the next day, nor on the following. No V. visible. A whole week passed. Something must have happened to him. He must have taken sick. Otherwise we could not explain this unwonted unpunctuality.

Then, one morning, he sat as usual in his accustomed place at the lecture.

"What, man, you are well and apparently have not been sick, what has kept your worthy person from our eyes for so long?" his friends assailed him during the intermission.

"Well, can't I indulge for once, too? I had a fine time. Have seen the imperial city from end to end and have determined to remove there during the next semester," he said in a rapturous tone.

"Well, well," the whole circle exclaimed in long drawn tones, "V. really becomes a spend-thrift."

"Yes, and with all that, this time you have been thoroughly fooled with your financial plans," I remarked laughingly.

"How so?"

"You forfeited your return ticket and besides must have had other

expenses. But your credit with me is unlimited, as you know, and if I can help you in any way—"

"Many thanks!" he exclaimed laughing. "I did not use as much as I took with me. More of it later."

Just then the professor entered and the loud talking and laughing ceased as by magic in the auditorium.

In the afternoon V. sat with me in my den and after he told me much and enthusiastically of the glories of the capital city, in my curiosity, I asked:

"But now, please, solve me the riddle how you could do all this with your financial condition and what is more, pay the increased price of your return trip? You have not borrowed, you say. Then you must have inherited something or asked passers-by for an alms, in which case I hereby declare that you have forfeited a student's honor and withdraw from you my friendship."

"Ha, ha! Neither of the two. The case is simply this—in Berlin I stayed with my sister who insisted on paying everything for me. As for my ticket, I did not forfeit it by any means. Having promised my sister at her urgent request to stay with her at least a week, I went to the railway station and shortly before the train was to leave for Leipzig, stationed myself near the ticket window and asked the first gentleman that came along: Do you happen to go to Leipzig? He said, yes. The usual fare for a single trip, as you know, is seven marks and 50 pfennig. I sold him mine for seven. Of this amount I gave my god-child a taler, and after deducting the expenses of my return trip, traveling fourth class with standing room only at 3 M, 50, I still have 50 Pfennig left. Here they are!"

Laughingly he showed me the coin.

"So you have stood well on your whole trip, and literally so in the fourth class railway compartment. Only a Low-German can accomplish what you did."

My Visit to Russia

In the summer of 1880 I visited my sister Louise at her urgent invitation. She was married in St. Petersburg to Johannes Grote who kept a book store and was quite prosperous.

I took a steamer at Stettin on the Baltic Sea. I had just enough money to pay for my passage. I knew the folks at St. Petersburg would pay my way back. At dinner I helped myself to some liqueur on the table, thinking it was for the free use of the passengers against seasickness. The steward afterwards asked for pay. I told him I had nothing.

The steamer stopped at Reval in Esthonia on the Bay of Finland. The sun set at 9:15 p. m. I took a long walk along the bay beyond the town limits, before the ship proceeded on its journey. As we neared St. Petersburg I saw what appeared to be a star on the horizon. It was the reflection of the sun in the gilded cupola of Isaac's Cathedral. I could read the newspaper on deck at 11 p. m. without artificial light. Those were the days of the short nights in the North. In fact there is no complete darkness at any time. I had to ask my sister to darken the room so I could sleep. On a mountain in Finland, not far from St. Petersburg, on June 21, the sun is seen at midnight.

My sister was not at the landing. If she had been she would have missed me. Before reaching the pier, some distance from the landing, there was a delay. Two young men with me said: "Let's hire a skiff to take us ashore." Thus we landed at a distant part of the city. How we ever passed the customs officers I do not know. My sister had to report my arrival to the authorities later. We took an isvostchick (cab) and drove to my sister's residence. She paid the cab driver.

For weeks it was so cold that I wore my winter overcoat. Then in August it turned so warm, that my uncle William said he could not see how it could be hotter anywhere.

My Uncle William, only brother of my mother, had learned the business of saddlery with my father. Having finished his apprenticeship, he went to St. Petersburg. Two of his sisters, Christiane (Hahl) and Catherina (Blissmer) and later my sister Louise (Grote) followed him there. He established himself in business there and owned the leading shop in leather goods—all kinds of travelling effects made of Russian leather famous for its peculiar odor. He had a branch store in London, had displays at various world expositions and received ten different medals. He married Alexandra who was called Sasha, had five children and died in 1881, aged 59 years. He presented me with a ten-rouble-bill (worth $5).

They owned a "datshe" or cottage on the Bay where I spent many pleasant days with them. It was warm now and we thoroughly enjoyed the sports on the water—rowing and swimming. Men and women bathed separately. One morning we boys rowed Uncle to the nearest railway station. Our skiff ran on a rock projecting under the surface of the water and was stuck fast. The cousins got excited, tilting the boat. Standing in the stern, with my oar, I pushed the boat backwards and it was soon afloat. Uncle complimented me on my presence of mind. However, I lost a gold locket containing my mother's picture. It fell into the water.

We visited Peterhof, the summer residence of the Czar, famous for its gardens and called "the Russian Versailles." Crossing the Neva River at Vassily Ostrov, an island in the river, we passed the Winter Palace, and visited Kronstadt on the opposite side of the Bay, the Russian Navy Yard and strong fortress guarding St. Petersburg. I spent a few days in a trip to Narwa in Estonia, where my Uncle Hahl had conducted an orphan asylum for forty years. I went there mainly at the request of my sister to clear up a private affair.

Return to America

I returned by steamer to Lübeck and by way of Hamburg to New York landing there early in October, 1880. At Bloomfield, only 14 miles from New York the dean of the Seminary showed me a letter from Rev. F. O. Koelle, asking that he send a candidate to take charge of the vacant First German Presbyterian Church of New Orleans. I asked him "What kind of a place is New Orleans?" He said: "It is semi-tropical, and they have yellow fever every year." Not very encouraging. I thought I would try it for a year and corresponded with the church. They sent me an urgent invitation to come and enclosed a check covering my transportation.

It was a glorious morning when accompanied by my brother Gottfried who had been a student at Bloomfield for two years, I took the train for New York. An acquaintance whom I met for the first time after my return from Germany and Russia and whom I told I was going to New Orleans said: "You take long trips."

Soon everything lay behind me—Bloomfield with all the dear acquaintances and associations, the Seminary where I had spent six of the best years of my life, my younger brother, New York—and I hastened towards the far South, alone with my thoughts. I had traveled five hours when the train stopped at Calicoon, where the busses from Jeffersonville meet the train. I had been offered on my return to Bloomfield to take charge of the church at Jeffersonville. I decided in favor of New Orleans. So I stepped out on the car platform to get a better view of the country. The train was just starting again, when among the people on the station platform, whom should I see, but Hein Seibert, my chum in Bloomfield and Leipzig. He saw me, too, and rushing towards me cried: "Where are you going?"

"To New Orleans." He was dumbfounded. "I will probably stay at Jeffersonville—Goodbye, God be with you!" That was the last of my acquaintances.

On we went, by way of Cincinnati, Louisville and Jackson, Miss. At Holly Springs, while the train stopped, I stretched my legs on the platform of the station. I was not traveling in a sleeper. I doubt if there was one

in the train. I was delighted to breathe the balmy Southern air. Further North I had already seen ice in the rills along the road.

The fourth day saw me in New Orleans. The station of the I. C. R. R. was then located some distance out, at Clio and Clara Streets. A little street car drawn by one mule brought passengers to Canal Street. I needed a hair cut. The barber on Canal Street said when he finished the job. "You need a shampoo." So I did. He charged me 75 cents.

According to the style then in vogue, I wore a long coat and stove-pipe hat. I was 24 years old. The first few days I spent at the hospitable home of Rev. F. O. Koelle. They had two boys and a baby girl, one year old, Katinka whom I often held on my lap. I have never enjoyed an orange like the one Mrs. Koelle gave me, grown in her own garden. With Pastor Koelle I spent several days visiting members of the church on First Street.

The Presbytery was called to examine my credentials. I had not yet been licensed to preach. The written parts of my trial for licensure assigned to me by Newark Presbytery, consisting of a Latin Thesis "De Resurrectione Corporis," an Exegesis of John 1:1-5 and a popular lecture on 1 John 4:8-13 were accepted. An oral examination on Arts and Sciences, Hebrew and Greek, Theology and Church Government, and Ecclesiastical History was sustained. I was ordained and installed as pastor, Oct. 24, 1880, at 3 p. m., the Moderator, Rev. A. N. Wyckoff, presided and also delivered a charge to the people in German. Rev. F. O. Koelle charged the pastor in German. Rev. Dr. B. M. Palmer preached on Eph. 1:2.

That was the beginning of my ministry in New Orleans. I came to stay a year. I have been here fifty-three years. I have sat at the bed of yellow fever patients, three of my own children were taken with the dread disease. I was spared from it. I had calls from Philadelphia and Cincinnati. I have preferred to stay with my people here. The Lord has blessed me



THE VOSS HOME AT UETERSEN—(See page 27).



with a devoted family of wife, three sons, three daughters and nine grand children. The name of the Lord be praised!

Some Notes About My Ancestors and Relatives

Written in part by my oldest brother Wilhelm and copied by my youngest brother Gottfried with additions from other sources.

(See the Family Tree)

MY GREAT GRAND PARENTS ON MY FATHER'S side were: I. Albert Laetari Voss, born 1743 in Holstein, died before 1801. He married Poppe Andresen.

II. Jochim Lembke, married Elsaba Haugens. He died before 1801.

My GRANDFATHER, Andreas Laetari Voss was born March 1, 1779. During the summer he worked as a brick mason, in winter as a butcher. "The only heirloom of him," writes Wilhelm, "was a silver watch in a shell case which our Father wore till his death when Uncle Jochim inherited it." He died Feby. 6, 1821, in Tating, Holstein.

My GRANDMOTHER Anna Catherine Judith Voss, nee Lembke, born about 1777 on the Island of Fehmarn in the Baltic Sea, died in the same year 1821. My FATHER was their first child. For some reason not stated, he was brought up by a Madam Göttsche in Glückstadt on the Elbe River and later by Lawyer Stephens in Elmshorn, where he became apprentice with a saddler. He also worked as a journeyman saddler in Uetersen. When he had learned the trade, he presented his "master piece" to the Guild at Elmshorn and established himself as Master Saddler in Uetersen, beginning in a small way, but with energy and prayer, in a little house at the Deich or Levee. Later he and his wife moved into a house at the upper end of Kuhlen Street, where Wilhelm and Gustav were born. In 1846, when Albert was born, Father bought the house at the lower end of Kuhlen Street, with a little garden. This is the house seen in the photo hanging in my study. It was taken in 1878. The persons in the picture are Clara and Albert, engaged to be married. Gottfried and Father standing in the door, sister Augusta looking out of the attic window and I, leaning on the adjoining house which Father had also purchased. I was home on my vacation that year. On my return to America, I took Gottfried with me. He was to enter Bloomfield Seminary as he "wanted to become what I was."

Other Children of my Father's Parents, my Uncles and Aunts

2. DOROTHEA, born 1813, died 1850 in Haselau near Uetersen where she stayed with her sister Catherine (see 4). She was paralyzed and usually sat in a big arm chair. She loved our father very much.

3. UNCLE JOCHIM, a merchant tailor in Uetersen. He made an overcoat to order for me on one of my visits home. I paid him at the end of the year. Like other business men he would collect his bills at New Year. He was also for many years sexton of the big church. In a very solemn way he would carry the lighted wax candles, three feet long and two inches thick, from behind the altar and placed them on the communion table. Often we boys would ring the angelus bell for him at noon or night. His wife, Tante Gretchen nee Thormahlen, died 1892, preceding him in death ten years. His younsest sons, Jacob and Johannes, emigrated to California and became prosperous farmers. They never married (See p. 28).

4. CATHERINE. Was engaged to be married, but her intended died before the wedding. She gave birth to a son, Johannes Kohbrook. Then she married a shoemaker, Reinhold Gripp. They lived in very modest circumstances. Our father assisted them in emigrating to Australia. J. Kohbrook adopted the name of Gripp. Later he went from Australia to California. Their children are Hardo, Willie and Tine (Mrs. Kate Ken-

nedy) Kate was a school teacher till she married, completely masters th English language, but can also read German script. Her husband Andrev Kennedy was Under Secretary of Education of Queensland. Her brothe William Lutheri was Inspector of the Department of Public Educatior He died Aug. 2, 1926, and left two married sons. Kate had eight childre and six grandchildren. She pays the following glowing tribute to he mother, my aunt Catherine:

"You never knew my mother. She was absolutely the sweetest an best character I ever knew. Always cheerful, most charitable, could alway find something good in any person however bad and worthless he or she was Always attributed good motives to people. Was a lady in the true sense o the word. She would not hurt any one's feelings, even if it was only th vegetable chinaman. Then she was a true Christian—lived the life but di not talk about it, only that she always said, and what is better, believed tha God knew best and everything would be for the best, if we only waited an trusted. Naturally she would have been much imposed on by unscrupu lous people, but she was always shielded, as much as it was in Father's an our power to do so. I can still see my Mother looking out over th fence to see if the children of several poor families were coming along. Thei she would slip something—perhaps half a joint or some bottles of jam o preserves or some fresh fruit, of which we had plenty growing—anyway always something. We always pretended not to see, as she never spoke o these gifts. Then my dear Mother would come in and with an extra inno cent look, like the pussy cat when it has been at the cream, and begin tc talk about something not connected with any home subject. Many a tim I had to run to an old Irish couple who lived near us, with a share of something nice that Mother had made. She was a very good cook. Few have been blessed with such a mother."

Hardo died many years ago in California. Johannes Kohbrook (Johr Gripp) also died there. His oldest daughter, Emma Elizabeth Gripp, wrot me Aug. 24, 1925, from their country estate in the California mountain at Montesano. She has one sister, Mrs. Percy Stuart and two brothers, Ray and Otto.

When their father's cousin (who is also my first cousin) Jacob Voss who made his home with them during the last year of his life, died on March 7, 1925. (His brother Johannes had died 15 years before) leaving no heirs, I had a lawyer to look into his estate. He sent me a copy of Jacob's will. He willed all of his property, appraised at $25,368.75, to his brother Andreas' children. Mrs. Paessler, Mrs. Dobelstein and their brother Fritz Voss, all residing in Hamburg, all his property except 20 shares of stock valued $500 to Emma Gripp. My niece Elli, at Hamburg wrote there were innumerable Fritz Voss, 135 Dobelstein and some 20 Paessler in the city directory and regretted she could not locate the relatives. Their Uncle Jacob had planned to visit them and had already purchased his ticket, when he died.

My Grandparents on Mother's Side

My GRANDFATHER was Niss Nissen, born July 7, 1785 in Flensburg, Holstein, where he owned a two-story house. He was a sail maker, also a candlestick maker and kept a grocery store. He married

My GRANDMOTHER Sophie Auguste Möller on Oct. 1, 1814, in Tönning. After her husband's death, Sept. 17, 1848, she moved to Uetersen and died at the home of my parents May 27, 1851.

Their Children

1. My MOTHER, Auguste Catherine Nissen, born May 3, 1816. She married my father on Palm Sunday, 1837, March 14. I have the original

letter, dated Pentecost Sunday, 1834, in which he proposed marriage to her. It is full of religious sentiment from beginning to end. He writes:

"I have asked your parents for your hand and the Lord has answered my prayer. They have gladly given their consent to our union and if we are agreed to share prosperity and adversity, to give us their parental blessing. Dearest, are you willing to lay your hand in mine, to unite your heart with mine? Money and possessions I have none, only a heart that beats warmly for you and is filled with the best wishes for the blessings of God. . . With the blessing of the Lord we shall find our daily bread. Or should we be anxious? It is written: "Cast your care upon the Lord. He is Love. "And if we should eat our bread with tears, it will taste sweet with His peace in our heart and with love and harmony between us. . . Your parents wish that we should wait two years before we marry. That is my wish, too, for I must first earn all the necessary tools and I also have yet to learn how to make saddle bows. I have a fine opportunity to do so at Glückstadt, where Mr. Götsche has offered me free board for 7 or 8 weeks. So now I can learn it for 5 or 6 talers. The same man also offered voluntarily to advance me 50 talers for learning my profession—I suppose as a loan. The necessary furniture, be it ever so little, will be given us, I trust in the Lord, by your parents. . . Or should you have an aversion to marry me? Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. If it is God's will, it will be done. And I have a strong hope that he will answer my earnest prayer and give you to me.

"Your brother in the Lord, Albert L. Voss."

2. PETER WILHELM NISSEN, (See pp. 24-25).

3. CATHERINE NISSEN BLISSMER. She was in Eckernförde when the Danish battleship Christian VIII was blown up by the Schleswig Holsteiners in 1849. She was born Aug. 16, 1825. She followed her brother to St. Petersburg where she was soon married to the artist painter, later photographer Gottfried Blissmer. Her children are Johannes and Gottfried who lived in Moscow.

4. DORIS NISSEN, born Jan. 5, 1828. She too followed her brother to St. Petersburg but never married. She traveled much as companion to wealthy and prominent people. I met her in Uetersen in 1878. It was she who enabled me to take a post graduate course at Leipzig, by lending me 600 Marks ($150) all of which I paid back during the first years of my ministry.

5. CHRISTIANE MATHILDE NISSEN HAHL, born May 10, 1830. She came with her mother to Uetersen, where for some years she had an establishment for dyeing silk. She declined a proposal to marry a Mr. C. Blunk and also went to Russia where she married Johann Nicolai Hahl in Narwa where he conducted an orphanage for 40 years. Their children are: Johannes, born Feby. 10, 1862, who was a customs officer at St. Petersburg. Samuel, business man at Rewal, and Immanuel who studied theology at Dorpat in 1890 where his widowed mother also lived. He is now pastor at Eichmedien in East Prussia.



ALBERT LUTHERI VOSS AND HIS WIFE, AUGUSTA NISSEN-VOSS,
MY PARENTS.

My Father

Born Jan. 29, 1806. Died May 20, 1885.

Rev. Dr. Plath, Director of the Gossner Mission Society in Berlin, published the following story in the "Kleine Missionsbiene," a missionary magazine for children.

"FATHER VOSS"

In the afternoon of Pentecost Sunday they buried in Uetersen, Holstein, an aged man, 80 years old, whom the Lord had called, a few days prior, from this world into the eternal world. It was "Father Voss," as many called him. By this name he was known not only by all those that lived in the same town with him, but in many different regions in the whole earth, in East India, in North America, in Russia and here in Prussia, also in Berlin many knew of him and greeted him as "Father Voss." To this dear godly man I want to erect here a little memorial monument. You know what I mean. I feel as if many will be glad to read the following:





First Family Reunion at Preetz, 1883.

Before me lies a large photograph (See above). On it our eyes behold in all sixteen persons. They are all in a beautiful garden, so it seems—at least in the background there are beautiful trees, from the foliage of which in some places stony rocks project. Eleven of them stand in a circular row, arm in arm, around a bench on which five are sitting. Before the latter a garden table with a vase holding a bouquet of flowers. This is the entire Voss family, nine children and five children-in-law, with one grandson, gathered around the head of the family. The old gentleman forms the center of the big circle: his place is in the middle of the four sitting with him on the bench and just before him are the flowers. At his right hand and at his left sit two daughters-in-law whose husbands then follow, so that the old gentleman is between two married couples. Two married couples also form the right and left wing, one daughter on the extreme left, the other on the extreme right, each with her husband at her side. Immediately behind the father stands the third daughter with her husband. Two tall stately young men respectively fill the space between the three standing couples and behind the most central point you can just see a boy, a grandson, only one representative of a great many who might have been in the picture but for the lack of room.

Who are all these? "Father Voss" was a saddler and in his home town he owned a little house in which he dwelt with wife and children. His companion is asleep many years, but his nine children are alive, bright and jolly and have flown from the paternal roof into all the four winds. Six sons and three daughters—to bring them all up, means something! And they all grew up and are stationed as adult women and men in life in the most diverse places. Let us start politely with the female cloverleaf. The name of the oldest is Doris who is married to Ferdinand Hahn of the Gossner Mission. These two happened to be on furlough in Germany and are



now standing here in the midst of their large relationship. The second, Auguste, is the wife of a teacher in Berlin, the third, Louise, that of a book dealer in St. Petersburg. The two sisters-in-law, between whom the aged father sits, are from Berlin. In the man on the left we recognize William Voss, our missionary to the Khols who at that time had also returned from East India to the homeland. The husband of the other is a minister in Holstein. Now there are still the four sons standing behind those seated. One of them is a teacher in Hamburg, the other upholsterer in a large city in North America. The last two are preachers in the same country, one at New Orleans—the residence of the other I don't know And of the grandson in the background I know nothing. But is not that a stately, fine and blessed family?

Their head, old Father Voss, was already 78 years when the picture was taken and had given up his business to rest during the evening of his life. Of course, he was not idle, but found much to do for the heathen in India and for all the institutions that care for the sick and the poor. The business of a saddler had formerly supported him—that was the golden foundation on which he had built his house. In it there prevailed a cheerful spirit which resulted from the christian faith and example of the parents in trying to live as Christians ought to live. They took a special delight in the noble art of music. There was much singing and playing in the family. When I first visited the little house in Uetersen we all sang a song together. After the last note I said in a cheerful mood:

Wo man singt, da lass dich fröhlich nieder,
Böse Menschen haben keine Lieder.
(Where people sing, you can with joy remain,
For evil people do not join in glad refrain).

That was fourteen years ago. Four years later and the seventieth birthday of the father was in sight. Whenever the head of a family reaches that age, the children contrive in time how to celebrate appropriately such a high point in human life. Yes, a German poet (Johann Heinrich Voss, no relative of ours) who lived up there in Holstein, has specially written a long poem entitled "The Seventieth Birthday' 'describing how such a day was celebrated in a teacher's home. You all know its beginning:

Auf die Postille gebückt zur Seite des wärmenden Ofens
Sass der redliche Thamm.
(Bent upon his book of devotions, by the side of the warmth giving stove sat the honorable Mr. Thamm).

And it is a specially beautiful day, such a birthday, when a man attains the aim of which Moses says in his psalm: "The days of our years are three score years and ten."

All this was known in the family of Father Voss and the sons and daughters planned how they might give some special joy to the dear old man. All that they planned to do I have not learned, but what I did hear was so nice and lovely that I must tell you about it—you will greatly enjoy it. Two plans were made and executed, one more beautiful than the other. What were they?

Number one! At Uetersen itself a document was prepared, several months before the birthday. It was a letter of congratulations, full of praise to the Lord for such a long life, and of good wishes for the evening of life now beginning soon. These words were signed first by the children at home with their father and then sent out to be carried around the earth by mail, that the children in distant parts might also sign it. So the letter went from Holstein, let us say, first to North America, thence to East India, then to St. Petersburg and finally back to Germany. Wherever the nine children of the aged father lived, they first read what was in the paper and then added their names to those already signed and when the last one was no longer lacking, the peculiar message took its journey back to the place of its origin. And if I am correctly informed, everything had

been calculated so nicely—or did it just happen that way?—it arrived just in time for the important day, the seventieth birthday of old Father Voss. He then read with joy what his children wished for him and found their names all together on one and the same sheet of paper that circled the globe. Was not that a beautiful surprise?

"But number two I almost like still better. Hear it and then say which one you like best!

"Several weeks before the birthday a gentleman of the town of Uetersen called on Father Voss and ordered from him, as he was an expert upholsterer as well as saddler, an armchair, upholstered and equipped with everything necessary, as fine and complete as possible, comfortable and tasteful—the price did not matter, the chair was to be a present. When a skilled mechanic gets such an order, his whole heart rejoices, for in the first place he can show what he can do—and in the next place he earns a good sum of money with it and thinks of his children who some day may need it. So then Father Voss went to work and labored with all diligence and great inner pleasure on the arm chair, the frame of which he ordered from a cabinet maker, as though it was to be his master piece. It was to be finished a few days before his seventieth birthday and then delivered. It would be paid in cash on delivery. On the appointed day the gentleman who had ordered it, accepted it with his full approval and also the price which the skillful maker demanded, was not too high for him, he pays the whole sum in cash. Father Voss pockets his well earned money, glad and cheerful because he succeeded so well. But what happened? When on the day on which he was seventy years old, he came from his bedroom in the morning and entered the living room there stands the arm chair—his children had ordered it made by himself for a present on his own birthday—it is his own property!

"Then, I surely believe, he sat down in it with great joy and comfort, leaning back in it with utmost pleasure. The children who were present must have realized how much joy their love had caused their aged father and surely wrote to the absent ones about it in their next letters. That's what I call a beautiful celebration of the seventieth birthday when children know how to give their father such joys.

"In that arm chair he also died, when on Thursday before Pentecost he sat in it. A few weeks before he had made a long trip. One of his grand daughters from India, who had been staying with her uncle in Preetz in Holstein, was to go to Birwalde in Pommerania to live with her sister and go to the same school. He went with her that she might get there safely. On this journey the dear old man had once again seen several of his children and grand children and many other good friends and acquaintances. Then he returned to Uetersen and not long afterwards came the good hour when his Lord called him home.

"On the beautiful day of Pentecost they laid him to rest. A son, minister of Holstein, spoke at his bier in the house, praising the Lord for the life of his father and the local pastor officiated at the cemetery. There he rests now and the thoughts of his children and of all those who loved him and still love him, go out to that place and within their hearts wish: "May he rest in peace and may the everlasting light shine upon him!"

To all of which I say Amen, except that the last phrase should not be a mere wish, but a statement of joyful assurance: It should not read—

"Requiescat in pace et lux aeterna luceat ei," but rather:

"Requiescit in pace et lux aeterna lucet ei!"

"In the Vineyard of the Lord"

This is the title of a volume published by the Schleswig-Holstein Society for Evangelization and Spiritual Life, on its fiftieth anniversary. It was started in the middle of the last century.

My Father was one of its founders and its secretary for many years.

The book contains the first circular letter sent out by him to those favoring such a movement, inviting them to join. It is dated Dec. 9, 1857.

The society was composed of laymen, mostly of a humble origin and station in life—mechanics, artisans and peasants, of little standing in the world, but actuated by the love of Christ in seeking to win souls for a consistant Christian life, though its first president was a Baron von Oertzen, and he was followed by Count von Bernstorf. Rev. Dr. Craig, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church at Hamburg which was supported by Irish Presbyterians, and who was greatly admired and beloved by my father, also sponsored and aided the society.

They sought no separation from the Established Church, but rather to serve it in reaching those who were indifferent to the church or wavering in their faith. The Society employed lay evangelists who gave their whole time in visiting towns and rural communities to hold evangelistic meetings and visiting homes. They made monthly reports. My father was never so employed, but spent much time in attending such meetings and ofter made addresses. It is generally admitted that the word of a layman coming from his heart, has a more stirring and edifying effect than that of a minister.

Members living in the same town would meet every Sunday afternoon for prayer, Bible study and the reading of a sermon by some noted evangelistic preacher, as they did in my father's house. Spurgeon was a great favorite with them. Not that they neglected the services in the church. Our family attended them every Sunday morning and my father was greatly attached to his pastor von Broecker brother-in-law of Field Marshall von Moltke and consulted him frequently. He had probably done so on his last day. Since the family reunion two years before, he had lived all by himself, with only a housekeeper. His wife had died 14 years before, his nine living children were again scattered in all the world. It seems that in his utter loneliness he considered marriage again to have a companion in his last few years or days. He consulted with his pastor about this who, however, advised him against such a step at his age. This seems to have so affected him that when he returned home, his housekeeper found him in his chair, his lunch untouched—he had fallen asleep to wake no more on earth. It may be said of him what we read of Enoch: "He walked with God and he was not, for God took him."

My Mother

Was born of godly parents. Her father, Niss Nissen, is referred to in our family notes as "one of the quiet in the land." I lost my mother when I was thirteen years old. I remember her as a gentle, loving woman. When father was absent from home on business trips, she conducted the morning family devotion. My parents never used harsh measures or words in training their children. I do not recall having received a beating from them. It was their quiet loving example that left its impress on their children. She died of diphtheria, suffering greatly for a few days. Having given her house a thorough cleaning for the Pentecost holidays she contracted a cold. When choking from the disease, with her fingers she pulled a piece of skin from her throat. She thought it was a piece of ham she had eaten and which lodged there. In reality it was a piece of her own membrane. We children were kept away from her during that last illness. Her photo showing her standing by the side of my father, which hangs in my study, was taken eleven days before her death. (See page 29).

MY DECEASED BROTHERS AND SISTERS

JOHANNES L., born Jan. 30, 1838, died of rheumatic fever, Feby. 7, 1863.

He was a teacher in Dockenhuden on the Elbe River, only a few miles

from Uetersen. When a boy, he had been taught that he must not fight back, when other boys assailed him. He obeyed this in a literal sense and would stand with his back to the wall, offering no resistance. After that, father changed his method of rearing his boys. At my brother's death, I was seven years old. His body was to be buried in our family burial plot. With other boys I had climbed to the cupola of the church steeple to watch its arrival. We could see the bridge of the highway spanning the Pinnau, a navigable stream skirting the town some two miles away. When the hearse crossed it we hastened down to announce at home: "They are coming."

Three of my mother's 13 children died in early infancy—August 3 1-2 years, in 1842, Albert in 1841, 3 months old and Auguste in 1849, aged 1 year.

WILHELM L.

Born June 14, 1842, died Aug. 14, 1888.

Was employed commercially at Flensburg when he decided to become a missionary. His business career and his natural inclination fitted him for practical wark. When he applied to enter the Missionary Seminary of Gossner's Mission in Berlin, the Inspector, Dr. Prechnow said to him: "If you are willing to shine the shoes of all the other missionaries, you may become an efficient missionary." This did not deter him. For twenty years he labored quietly and unostentatiously among the Khols, the lowest caste in India. He lost his first wife and a pair of twin children by death. No less a sacrifice was it for him to send all his children to Germany at the age of 7 or 8, as the climate of India is not conducive to their bodily or mental development. When he was transferred to the Ganges Mission in a low and unhealthy region, he took the fever and though he went to the Himalaya mountains, he died of it, at the age of 46. (See Matth. 19:29).

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GUSTAVE L.

Born July 13, 1844, died Nov. 24, 1888.

Came to this country to avoid military duty in the Schleswig-Holstein War of 1866, and settled in Chicago where he married Sally Groll who bore him 5 children, only one of whom is now living, Adolph, treasurer of the American Colortype Company. Gustav had learned upholstery. At one time he was manager of a furniture concern. Having an unusually fine tenor voice and good knowledge of music, he was much sought after by choirmasters of prominent churches. He had a suit made of the cloth I brought him from Germany, in which with a gray stove pipe hat to match it, he made a fine appearance. He joined me with his son, Gustav, Jr., and our brother Gottfried in 1883 to attend our first family reunion all sailing on the same steamer. Gottfried and I met at his bier in Chicago. We had hoped to meet him alive, but arrived too late.

ALBERT L.

Born Feby. 16, 1846, died Aug. 20, 1919.

I published the following article about him in the Old Folks' Home Messenger of Oct. 1919:

The first mail from Germany in several years brought the Editor the sad news of the death of his only surviving brother, Rev. Albert L. Voss, who died at Kiel, Germany, on August 20, 1919, at the age of 73 years, 6 months and 4 days.

The departed had retired from the active ministry a few years ago, when his health began to fail. Most of his ministry was spent in Bornhöved, a church which a few years ago celebrated its 750th anniversary. In his younger days, while he was yet a candidate for the ministry, he had been private tutor of the two princesses of Schleswig Holstein, the elder of

which, Augusta Victoria, afterwards became the German Empress. She retained for him a life-long friendship.

His son, Rev. Theo. Voss, pastor at Kiel, writes concerning the death of his father under date of August 27:

"It is with deep emotion that I forward this letter to you. Your letter arrived yesterday, when all the family was gathered here in Kiel. On the day before we had accompanied my dear father to his last resting place. On August 20 a heart-stroke put an end to his richly-blessed life. Tenderly and quietly our God has taken him away in perfect health to his heavenly home.

"You will be surprised to get this news from Kiel. I have been pastor here since December, 1916. My parents wished to remove to this city also and since the summer of 1918 they have lived here. Father, whose health had been poor, especially at the time when he retired from the ministry, had somewhat recuperated in Wandsbek, Hamburg, and still more so here in Kiel. Here he found many old and new friends. He still sang in my church choir and assisted me in my labors with clerical work. He helped my two boys with their school work. His heart gave him trouble at times. He would have to stop in his walk suddenly, until he had rested a little standing. Thus, with his hearty appearance and the vivacity and cheerfulness of his nature he still gave the impression of a specially hale and hearty old gentleman. We knew that these heart attacks were dangerous, but had not counted on so sudden a departure. On Wednesday we had planned an excursion by boat. We were to meet at the steamer at 3. A half-hour before he started ahead slowly, as he loved to do. Mother intended to follow him at once. The rest of us went an entirely different way. When he had just left the house a lady friend met him and engaged him in a short conversation. At the same moment he collapsed. Loving arms carried him into his house—he had already gone to his heavenly home.

"My dear father found a beautiful death. Kindly, as the Lord had led him all through life, He also led him out of it. He enjoyed much sunshine in his old age and could still strengthen many a saddened heart by his beautiful optimism. To us his loss is very grievous, for we lose much in him and shall miss him sorely. On Monday he was interred in our large and beautiful cemetery, which he loved so much. The love of many devoted friends decorated his bier and grave; also his princely friends did not forget him. Even our sorely-tried Empress sent a personal telegram.'

CHRISTIAN L.

Born Dec. 30, 1849, died Jan. 6, 1916.

Was Rector of a girls' school in Hamburg, connected with St. Michaelis Church. While Sadie and I were in Berlin, that famous church burnt down. It was afterwards rebuilt at a cost of $2,000,000. I attended a class of my brother's in religion and was gratified at the knowledge displayed by the children. I realized the power of religious instruction by a trained and sound teacher. Sadie and I took part in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the wedding of Christian and his wife Toni Sievert. Brother Albert and Brother-in-law Hahn spoke at the solemn ceremony. Afterwards about 40 persons sat down to the table in the hotel where it was given. Several plays written for the occasion were enacted and many verses all with a personal point were sung. Sadie described the wedding in her diary of the trip.

DORIS

Born May 16, 1852, died Aug. 19, 1917.

She married Ferdinand Hahn, a missionary in India, whom she had seen only once, when with Brother Wilhelm he departed for India. From there he wrote to our father asking for the hand of his daughter. As she was willing to go, father also consented. It turned out to be a happy

marriage. Twelve children were born to them. She shared with so many missionaries the sacrifice of giving up her children at the age of 5 to 7 to be raised in the homeland under Christian surroundings. Three of her sons are ministers in America, one was killed in the World War. Two daughters now in America married ministers. Of three daughters in Germany, one was married to a missionary. She and her husband are both dead. Two children died young. At the beginning of the World War, Doris, after 40 years of labor in India, was expelled from that country by the English. Her husband had died 5 years before. Already sick before she started she was near death on the ship. It carried 400 passengers with accommodations for only 200. Her noble son-in-law, Paul Wagner, also expelled, died from the hardships soon after reaching the homeland. His wife who had been an invalid in Germany, also died. Another daughter became mentally afflicted. Under these strains the mother's mind also was affected, when the Heavenly Father took her home. She died and is buried in Wernigerode in the Harz Mountains.

GOTTFRIED L.

Born Jan. 4, 1861, died June 30, 1891.

He came with me to America in 1878 to enter Bloomfield Seminary. It was my last year there. He graduated in 1885 and became pastor of the German Presbyterian Church at Sayreville, N. J., the only church he ever served. A friend of his Rev. H. C. Gruhnert, writes of him: "Those were years of quiet, blessed labor and of happiness in his home and church, hardly disturbed at any time, in accordance with his character. Contentment and reliance upon God were his strong qualities by which also he honored his own name Gottfried—Peace of God. Seeking no great things, it was his joy to do his duty and to do good without ceasing." Many similar tributes were paid him by his brethren. He was greatly beloved by them and by his congregation. He married Sarah Gekle in Bloomfield, May 26, 1886. They had no children. Having preached one Sunday in another church and taken dinner with one of its members, he sat in a draught and being wet with perspiration from preaching he contracted rheumatism. He was taken to Bloomfield and there nursed by his wife in her parents' home for three weeks, when his sickness attacked his heart and he died, only 30 years old. I received the following telegram, the original of which I still have:

Bloomfield, N. J., June 30, 1891.

Rev. Louis Voss, 449 Chippewa St., New Orleans:

Dear Louis—Your brother Gottfried died this morning. Can you come? If so, funeral will be postponed till Monday. Answer immediately."

"HENRY SEIBERT."

Knowing nothing of his sickness. I was greatly shocked. I had six days to reach Bloomfield in time for his funeral and started at once. The last time we had met was in Nov. 1888, at the funeral of our brother Gustav. Gottfried returned home by way of New Orleans where he was our guest for a few days and preached in my pulpit on Sunday. His dead body lay in an upper room. My bedroom adjoined the front room. There was no other person on the upper floor. There I alone kept him company in broken sleep, while his was "unbroken by the last of foes."

My Two Surviving Sisters

My sister AUGUSTE, two years my senior, still lives in Berlin where she has occupied the same apartments on the third floor for over 40 years. She is the one referred to in Hein Seibert's story, pages 22-24. Only she had then no youngest child, or any child, having been married only a few months. Seibert drew on his imagination when he relates that I was to stand as godfather to her child. She married Hermann Schinck on

March 21, 1880. She has 2 sons: Fritz who is pastor of the church at Schönermark in Prussia. Otto who is Oberstudienrat in Berlin, and one daughter, Addie, who is unmarried and lives with her mother.

My sister LOUISE is two years younger than I. She is the widow of Johannes Grote who was at the head of Grote's University Book Store in Berlin. For forty years they had lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, where her husband had a book store. He was also the agent of the Russian Tract Society and very active in local evangelistic work. During the World War her husband and two sons were exiled to Siberia. She was allowed to join them there until they were all allowed to return to Germany by way of Sweden. When they reached a far Northern city there at 11 o'clock at night, the sun still brightly shining, they were welcomed with open arms on leaving the train and proceeded on their way to Germany.

Both the above sisters were married on the same day, March 21, 1880, at a double wedding, in Uetersen. Louise had 7 children. Two of her sons were killed in the World War. Three sons and two daughters are living. It was my sister Louise who procured for me a copy of the "Memoirs of the Countess of Lichtenau," a book now out of print, which, with the frequent references to Lichtenau in the old family letters, led me to start writing this book. I have used the summer leisure to gather the material and it has given me pleasure to write it down in English for the present and the coming generation, and I believe they will read it with pleasure and profit.

OUR FAMILY LETTER

In 1886, writing to my brother Christian at Hamburg. I incidentally deplored the scarcity of letters received from him and the other members of the family and said:

"Here I would mention a matter affecting all of us and which I have been thinking about for some time. I had often regretted that since the death of our father, I had had news from my brothers and sisters very irregularly; that I had heard of a plan said to be followed by college alumni which, if adopted by us, might remedy this condition, as it would assure our hearing from all of us at least every 3 or 4 months. The plan is simply this:You send this letter to brother Albert, enclosing a letter of your own. Albert does the same and forwards the three letters to sister Auguste. She adds her letter and the fourfold missive goes to St. Petersburg. Then in the same manner to Ranchi and Lohardagga in India, thence to Sayreville, N. J., and Chicago, Ill. Finally it returns to me as a ninefold letter. I take out my first letter and substitute a new one and then the letter starts on a new circuit, from now on always containing nine letters. If promptly forwarded, we can each get it at least three times a year. I need hardly to add that this plan need not interfere with our private, direct correspondence with each other, especially sending birthday letters, etc. It simply aims at a regular communication between us all. I would be glad to have expressions of opinion or suggestions from all."

This plan was gladly agreed to and in four months I had nine letters in one cover from all the members of our family. What a joy it gave me to read them may be imagined.

Since then the Family Letter has circulated without interruption, except during the World War, to this day, for 47 years. I have a stack of over 100 letters of my own, extracted each time and carefully preserved. They contain many incidents occurring in my own house and family. Only that now the Letter embraces 21 letters. It goes to all the five continents, actually circling the globe, and takes seven months to return to each writer. It goes to the following places:

U. S. A.—New Orleans, Missouri, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania.

Germany—Hamburg, Kiel, Berlin, (3 families) East Prussia (2 fam.). Baden-Baden. India—2 families.
Africa—Tanganyika Terr. (2 fam.). Australia—Brisbane.

OUR FAMILY REUNIONS

Five times the Voss Family has met in a family reunion, viz: in 1883, 1894, 1906, 1922 and 1929. The first was held at Preetz and Uetersen, in Holstein, where all the children of our parents were born.

The name Uetersen is the Low-German form of "Outer End," designating its situation on the rim of the higher sandy soil where it joins the rich bottom lands along the Elbe River which is about four miles distant. The town has a present population of about 6000. It will celebrate its 700th anniversary shortly. A convent was established there in 1234 or 1235 which at the Reformation was changed into a Home for unmarried women of nobility. There are four similar institutions in the province. Uetersen can also boast of the oldest education system in Holstein. Its magnificent church, built in the baroque style, was erected in 1749. Here six brothers and three sisters, from many parts of the world, including Russia, America, and India, as well as various parts of Germany, with some children-in-law and grand children, gathered around the venerable Father Voss, now 77 years of age. The mother had died 14 years before.

A full account of this event was given in a letter I sent to the Southwestern Presbyterian. The Picayune published the following notice of this letter:

A very interesting letter from the Rev. Louis Voss, pastor of the First German Presbyterian Church, of this city, appears in the Southwestern Presbyterian of the 13th instant. This letter bears date Hamburg, Aug. 14, and contains an account of the meeting of the entire Voss family, except the mother, after a separation of 20 years, or thereabout. The good mother had died in the childhood of 13 children. Of this number, four departed this life young, four became ministers, one daughter married a minister, and the remainder developed into useful members of society in other spheres. Last year came the announcement that a brother and sister, after 15 years' labor in the cause of religion in India, would take a vacation for the purpose of visiting their father, and the idea was suggested that the other children should meet the father at the same time. The reunion was arranged to take place at Preetz, the home of the third brother. It was most pathetic. The picture of the aged father, surrounded by nine children, whom he had not seen for so many long years, and his grandchildren, was touching beyond expression. At the good father's request, the family resolved to have a public missionfest in their native town of Uetersen, and it was accordingly given, the programme consisting of hymns, sacred song, duos, trios and quartettes, and sermons by Rev. A. L. Voss, of Preetz, Holstein, Wm. Voss, of East India, Louis Voss of New Orleans, and the brother-in-law, F. Hahn, of East India, respectively. The public hall was filled, and those in attendance, as might be expected, were deeply impressed by the ceremonies.

My letter is preserved in our Family Scrapbook.

Our Father survived this memorable gathering only two years. They were years of loneliness. He died in 1885 with none of his immediate family around him, except his brother Uncle Jochim. Two brothers, Gustav and Wilhelm died in the year 1888, and our youngest brother Gottfried in 1891.

But in 1894, when sister Doris and her husband came home again on furlough, the surviving six children, 3 brothers and 3 sisters met again, with more numerous grandchildren than on the first occasion. An account of this family gathering is also described in a letter to the Southwestern Presbyterian which is also found in our Family Scrapbook.

After another twelve years, in 1906, our sister Doris with her husband, again had earned a furlough and again the same three brothers and three sisters met together: Doris from India, August from Berlin, Louise from St. Petersburg, Albert, pastor at Bornhöved, Holstein, Christian rector in Hamburg and myself with my daughter Sadie from New Orleans. First



1894. AT UETERSEN.



1906. AT KIEL





we all attended a great celebration of brother Christian's silver wedding in Hamburg. A few days later we went to the nearby home town of Uetersen, where we attended a service in the big church, and afterwards visited our parents' grave in the cemetery. It fell to me to make the address on that solemn occasion. Our family reunion was held at Kiel, where the Hahns spent their vacation. My daughter and I returned by way of Genoa, having made a trip to Cologne, then up the Rhine, through Switzerland, through the St. Gotthard Tunnel, we stopped at Milan for a day to see that city and attended the International Exposition held there that year and embarked at Genoa. Our steamer stopped for a day at Naples, then at Gibraltar and the Azores Islands and we landed at New York. All this is described in a series of articles as "Editorial Correspondence" in the Southwestern Presbyterian, of which I was the Associate Editor.

As the years passed by, our family circle was further narrowed down. Our brother Christian died in 1916, sister Doris in 1917, and Albert in 1919. This left only myself and my two sisters Auguste and Louise, both living in Berlin. The World War, for a time had made any intercourse by mail impossible. With the return of peace, naturally I was anxious to see my sisters once more.



1922, AT POTSDAM

So in 1922 I started out once more for the homeland, this time taking my youngest daughter Elsie with me. My two sisters from Berlin and my sister-in-law Toni met us at the landing. We spent several days at Uetersen, visiting our parents' grave and making trips to the surrounding country. From there my sisters returned to Berlin. A family reunion had been planned for August in Berlin where most of our relatives lived. The intervening time Elsie and I spent travelling. At Kiel we spent several days with my nephew Theodor, pastor of a church there, making trips on



the Baltic Sea and the beautiful lakes and beech forests of Eastern Holstein We had purchased a round trip railway ticket through Germany and Switzerland, including all the points we desired to visit. It cost an enormous sum in German money, but only about $15 in American money. It was a the beginning of the inflation of the German Mark. Daily it sank in value In Hamburg it had been 400 to the dollar, in Uetersen 500, later it was 1000 and before we left Germany it was 1500. It finally reached the bottom a a billion. With our American money we had the advantage of this: For once in our life we felt like rich people. We stopped at the best hotels for $1 a room. A six course dinner in the railway dining car cost about 2 cents. We felt all the time as if we were taking undue advantage of the poor poeple. Everybody was groaning about the "high prices." We joined my niece Greta Wedekind and her husband at Harzburg and went through the romantic Bodetal famous for the tales of witches. From there we went to Eisenach and rode up the Wartburg castle where we saw the room in which Martin Luther was hidden for two years and translated the New Testament. Then by way of Cassel, Cologne and Bonn by rail and from there by steamer up the Rhine to Mainz. We stopped a day at Heidelberg to visit the castle ruins (its big wine vat holds 300,000 quart) At Interlaken in Switzerland, the most international place in Europe, we stopped long enough to visit its attractions and to ride to the summit of the Jungfrau Mountain over 13,000 feet high. The temperature there was below freezing. That trip was not included in our ticket and cost us $12 extra. There was no inflation in Switzerland. Crossing the Lake of Constanz from Zürich to Lindau, we reached Munich. Desiring to see the Passion Play at Ober Ammergau, we visited that famous quaint Alpine village a gathering place of the whole international world. The play lasted from 8 to 12, and again from 2 to 6. The fine acting, the magnificent herald the trained chorus of 40 voices and a good orchestra—all by the village people—the deeply religious atmosphere and the absence of all profiteering impressed us very favorably. We stayed at a villa which J. P. Morgan of New York had occupied the day before. The price for room and board including admission to the play, was 500 Marks—$1 in American money!

After that we spent a day at quaint Nürnberg and another at still quainter Rotenburg, the oldest town in Germany, maintaining its medieval character. Then by way of Würzburg, Schweinfurt, Bamberg and Hof the birthplace of Grandma Hoppe and her brother and sisters, we reached Dresden where we stopped two days, making a sight seeing tour and visiting the famous picture gallery with the original of the Sistine Madonna.

We reached Berlin on August 6 and spent two weeks there with our folks, shopping, hearing the operas of "Freischütz" and "Il Trovatore,," making side trips to Potsdam and to Schönermark where Fritz Schinck is pastor, until finally the day for our family reunion, Sunday, Aug. 13, arrived. We all met at Potsdam. Twenty-three persons sat down to the dinner table in a hotel outside of the town. The program had all been prepared by my nephew Cornelius. We gathered in a secluded spot in the woods. My nephew Theodore from Kiel read the 46th psalm and 1 Corinthias 13. He then delivered the address. He spoke of the Unity of the Spirit in our Family. "By family" he said, "I mean not only us now living, neither those who have passed away, but those also who come after us—our ancestors and our descendants. Those form a real family only if they are united not merely by the bonds of blood, but by the same spirit. What is it that binds us who are gathered here to-day together? We might find the bond that unites us in mutual love—that love which St. Paul extols in 1 Cor. 13—that love which was manifested so richly, especially by those across the ocean, during these recent trying years. But other families, too, are bound together by love and, thank God, there are many such. So I do not think that this is a bond for unity peculiar to our family. Is it,



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then, to be found in a strong faith in God? We rejoice that we all share the Psalmist's trust in God as expressed in the 46th psalm, and we are grateful that we can overcome all fear and anxiety in the bold faith that "the God of Jacob is our refuge, the Lord of Hosts is with us," but the ultimate and strongest tie that binds us together is not even there.

"Our thoughts to-day go back to our aged grandfather, to him whose blood flows in our veins and of whose spirit we have all received a portion. His name should not be forgotten in any church history of our native province Schleswig-Holstein. As one who was apprehended by Christ, he labored to bring the personal Christ close to his friends and his children. If this was his peculiarity, so it has become the peculiarity of our entire family that we call Christ our Lord. We may not show it in the same outward form. Religious life and experience are as varied as Christian personality itself—they are manifested in accordance with the individual traits of each, but in the essential matter: in personal surrender to Christ, being apprehended by Christ—in this we are one with our grandfather and with one another.

A new generation is arising. Eight boys of the fourth generation bear our family name. Since our last family reunion, several of the former generation have passed away. May the coming generation perpetuate the spirit of our fathers, our family spirit! And if this, our fourth family reunion, should be the last, then may the new families that have sprung up from sons and daughters, from grandsons and granddaughters, be the channels through which the spirit of our grandfather shall flow abroad in living faith and loyal service to Christ. May this ever be the peculiar trait of our family: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever!"

And yet, it was not the last reunion. After seven years my sisters,



both still living at Berlin, hailed with delight my announced purpose of visiting them once more. This time I went alone, except that my wife who would not leave her aged mother for so long a time, met me at New York on my return and we spent some delightful days together, attending the silver wedding of my nephew Theodore Hahn, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Scranton, Pa., visiting relatives at Philadelphia and spending a day sightseeing at Washington. I will not relate the incidents of my trip, but confine myself to the family reunion held on Sunday, Sept. 1, 1929, at the Wingolf House in Berlin, owned by a student fraternity of that name, of which my nephew Otto Schinck was a member, and nephew Cornelius Voss was and is the manager of the building.

At the devotional service, my nephew Fritz Schinck and I were the speakers. He chose for his text, 1 Tim. 1:13. "I obtained mercy." He said: "Seldom does a man experience such a change as that which Paul here alludes to in his own life. It happens more frequently that a child of godly parents chooses a path very different from the one aimed at in his training. We praise the mercy of God to-day that the legacy of faith received from our fathers has not been dissipated in our family, but passed down from generation to generation. It is a peculiarity of our family that most of its members are serving the Lord, whether as ministers or missionaries or in church work and occupations somehow related to the Kingdom. We do not boast of this, we recognize and acknowledge our weakness and praise the mercy of God which has enabled us and counted us faithful and put us into the ministry—(V. 12) as Paul did. The thought that this may be the last of our family reunions fills us with sadness, but not with sorrow, "God's Mercy" is written over the past of our family, over the present life of every one present here and points to our blessed hope for the future, as we look to the "Many Mansions" in our Father's house where we shall meet in a family reunion not followed by a separation.

I spoke on the text, Hebr. 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

I said: "That earth is not our true home, that we are strangers and pilgrims here, my two sisters and I painfully realized on our recent visit to Uetersen. Our father's house on the old homestead was unchanged, but the people living in it were strangers to us. Among the town people hardly half a dozen knew us. Some hardly remembered even our family. The words of Geibel come to my mind:

And now has passed full many a year,
Since I was young and happy here.
And walked this road with joyous feet,
Yet now—I scarcely know the street.
Ah, how this world has changed! I, too, have changed.
And am not as I once have been.

We are strangers and pilgrims on earth. Some of us are not very far from the end of our pilgrimage. After all the separations and heartaches of life, there remains to us only that hope which is the keynote of the Scriptures, a hope based on the promises of God and salvation through Christ—the hope of life everlasting.

Of the direct descendants of my father, Albert L. Voss, Sr., there are now living 3 children, 36 grand children, 45 great-grand children and 6 great-great-grand children.

With the Psalmist we can say: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations", Psalm 90:1.

May this be true of the present and coming generations, for whom these pages were written!

MEMOIRS

of the

Gaschen and Voss Families

OF NEW ORLEANS

By LOUIS VOSS

Dedicated to my wife and her folks and mine

Written in July, 1933.